JOUR 3420: Public Relations Writing, Fall, 2016
Section 2, Tuesday & Thursday 9:30—11:00 a.m.
The Twitter hashtag for this course is #untj3420

Instructor: Samra Jones Bufkins, MJ, APR
Office: GAB 113  Office phone: 940-565-2167
Cell phone: [redacted] (text any time, include name & class, call if an emergency.)
Office hours: Monday 2-3 p.m.; Tuesday & Thursday 11 am – 12 noon; Tuesday 1–2 pm; other times by appointment.
E-mail: Samra.Bufkins@unt.edu
Twitter: @samjb
Skype: IamSamJB

Description:
This class is designed to develop students’ professional public relations research, analysis and writing skills. To become effective public relations professionals, students will work and act proactively in response to tight deadlines. Students must complete JOUR 3321 as a prerequisite to this course.

Course Objectives:
1. Ability to create a variety of Public Relations documents.
2. Demonstrate understanding of Public Relations concepts.
3. Conduct research and critically evaluate information.
4. Understand how to best utilize media for Public Relations communications.
5. Recognize legal and ethical challenges and understand crisis communications response.
6. Use AP style in all written assignments.
7. Recognize opportunities to think creatively in designing and writing work products.
8. Apply narrative writing principles to feature assignments.
9. Work proactively to complete and correct assignments under deadline pressure.
10. Write clear and concise copy.

Statement of Key Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
2. Think critically, creatively and independently.
3. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
4. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
5. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

 DEADLINES: As demanded in a professional environment, deadlines and formats are strictly observed.
Required Textbooks:


Recommended Texts*:


* Note: References texts are used in future courses

Additional Required Resources:

- UNT class Blackboard LEARN (LEARN.UNT.EDU)
- UNT email (Required by university & FERPA policy)
- Twitter account with unprotected tweets (see instructions in Blackboard)
- Regular reading of The Dallas Morning News, The New York Times, and listening to NPR Morning Edition and All Things Considered. (Most of the radio content is available online after broadcast).
  - A stapler (*I will not accept multi-page assignments that are not stapled.*)

Class Attendance:

Class attendance is required. If you miss class it is your responsibility to check the class schedule and Blackboard announcements. **In-class assignments cannot be made up.**

Excused Absence: If you are not able to attend due to an excused absence event, contact me by Blackboard or email before or immediately after a missed class. It is your responsibility to provide me with a written form of proof (obituary of direct, close family member, doctor’s note, accident report) by the next class period. There is no make-up or modified due date for any assignment without an excused absence.

Unexcused Absence: Missing a class without a written form of proof, arriving more than 15 minutes late, leaving early, leaving and returning during class for more than 5 minutes is considered an unexcused absence. Assignments not turned in with a hard copy due to an unexcused absence are considered late.

Class Conduct:

Class meetings are conducted as business meeting with students developing as Public Relations professionals. Cell phones are to be turned off and put out of visual sight. Computers located in the classroom may be used only to take notes and/or conduct approved activities. There is no eating or drinking in the classroom.

There may be additional or modified requirements announced to maintain classroom etiquette, academic standards, speakers and/or school class objectives.
Communication between students and instructor is primarily via email and Twitter. I will email you from the class Blackboard page and am required to contact you via your official university email account. Please respond from your UNT account.

- Communicating with students using the UNT student email account is part of the university's contract with students.
- Email, text and Twitter communication will be professional and utilize correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, as in all business communication.
- I will not discuss grades via Twitter or text messages. Email me or see me in my office.
- If you send me a message via Blackboard Messages, please text me about it, because I rarely check it.

**ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION:**

**Deadlines:**
Deadlines are a key component of PR professional development. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due in Blackboard and in hard copy at the start of class. Assignments are considered late if not received by the start of class or at the designated deadline. All assignments will be corrected and resubmitted in Blackboard within one week of receipt. Late assignments are not accepted.

All assignments are to be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise specified. There are no exceptions. Anything not submitted via Turnitin will receive a grade of 0 (zero). Turnitin is also set to lock out late submissions. It is your responsibility to ensure your computer clock is synchronized with Turnitin. No emailed submissions are accepted.

Submitting an assignment late (“I was uploading it at 11:59 and Turnitin locked me out”) will result in a zero.
Situations in which your computer clock is wrong, the system slows down because so many people are submitting at the deadline, and problems with incompatible browsers are your responsibility. **Perform a browser check to ensure you are using a compatible browser.** Maintain your computer equipment and get help if you need it, particularly if you’re having trouble running any online applications. Own your work (and your mistakes), and plan accordingly. Most problems that occur at the deadline are self-inflicted and avoided with better planning. See Blackboard for specific instructions. Set reminders on your mobile device calendar—just like professionals do.

I am not the help desk and cannot help you with technical problems in Blackboard or your computer. If you have a documentable problem with Turnitin or Blackboard that affects your ability to submit work on time, you must do the following to receive credit for your work:

1. **IMMEDIATELY** create a screen shot of the error message.
2. Report the problem to the Help Desk by phone (940-565-2324) and email (helpdesk@unt.edu).
3. Forward the trouble ticket number and the screen shot to me via email.

If I determine it is a legitimate technical problem with Blackboard and Turnitin (they are rare) I will let you know how to submit the work to receive credit.

**SAVE YOUR TURNITIN RECEIPTS. NO MATTER WHAT YOU “THINK” YOU DID, IF IT’S NOT IN MY TURNITIN AND YOU DON’T HAVE THE CONFIRMATION RECEIPT, IT’S A GRADE OF ZERO.**

All assignments must also be submitted as hard copy (in addition to the Turnitin submission).

- Multiple page documents not stapled together will not be accepted.
- Unless instructed otherwise, all assignments must be word-processed in 12-point font with margins no wider than 1,” 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. Well-executed assignments riddled with typos, GSP errors and formatting errors will receive a low grade and I reserve the right to stop reading and grading anything that’s unreadable.

- **Failing to prepare a hard copy or attach a reference list will cost you a letter grade for that assignment.**
- **All sources must be cited within the text and/or at the end of the assignment.** Sources must be cited in their entirety, whether a website, blog, book, magazine or journal article, or any other scholarly source, including the date of publication, or an interview. Citation of online sources must follow the format from the Purdue Online Writing Lab, [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/10/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/10/) and must be complete. **Raw links like the one above will not be accepted as citations or bibliography entries.** Any omission of these citations will result in a lowered grade and possible investigation for plagiarism. When in doubt, cite. Don’t press your luck.
- **In the case of inclement weather or other emergency resulting in the closing of the university or canceling of class, any assignments due must still be submitted electronically on the due date, with hard copy to be submitted at the next class meeting.** No exceptions (unless there’s a complete power blackout).
- If the university is closed due to inclement weather or other emergency we will engage in an online chat of some sort during regular class time. Watch Twitter and email for instructions, and consider setting up a Google + account.

**Individual assignment grade appeals:**

If you are unhappy or have a question about the grading of an individual assignment, blog post or test, you must notify me in writing (email is fine) by the beginning of the next class after the graded work is returned. We’ll meet to discuss the grade. Under no circumstances will I consider changing the grade on any individual assignment after final grades are posted at the end of the semester. See submission guidelines above—this includes “But I turned it in, I just didn’t get the receipt.” You are responsible for ensuring your online submissions are completed. Check the Blackboard gradebook regularly.

Back up your work in Google Docs, Dropbox or other cloud platform in case your hard drive fails or your flash drive is lost or destroyed. It is your responsibility to ensure your work is completed and accessible at all times. Save all your work and Turnitin receipts until the end of the semester, as you will re-submit clean copies as part of your portfolio. **SAVE YOUR TURNITIN CONFIRMATION RECEIPTS.**

**ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS**

**Reading Assignments:**

Reading assignments not in the class schedule are announced on Blackboard and must be completed prior to class to prepare for class discussion.

**Writing Requirements:**

All written submissions, assignments, discussions and emails will be in standard English using college-level grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary and in 12-point Times New Roman. The AP Stylebook is the grammar, punctuation, spelling and usage guide for this class.

Your work products must “look” finished, be ready for actual use (without mistakes or errors) and demonstrate critical thinking, research, planning and college-level writing.
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.

Expectations:
Assignments will be graded according to content/key messages, style and grammar, design and format, and how well you execute the assignment based on my instructions.

- **Content and message appeals**: Your writing will be evaluated for factual accuracy, organization of thought, strength of message, inclusion of the human element, persuasiveness, originality, and other content issues relevant to each assignment.

- **Format and citations**: Proper format is nearly as important as content and GSP. Adhere to the assigned format. This is important for your professional work, as well, as there are very good reasons for specific formatting requirements.

- **Grammar, style and punctuation**: The Associated Press Stylebook and Daily Writing Tips as well as The Purdue Online Writing Lab (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/) will be your writing guides. Your writing will be graded carefully for mechanical content and construction.
  - General sloppiness or lack of professionalism will result in a lowered grade.

- **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. Clients have a habit of telling students to “get it from the website.” This is a writing class, not a copy and paste class. Lifting huge chunks, even with attribution, from client websites and other sources is also considered academic dishonesty.

- **Always research more than you think you need and use multiple sources** to discover your own ideas and story angle. Do not rely exclusively on Google—try Google Scholar, Dogpile, and that wonderful resource known as the library. Cite all sources completely (on a separate sheet attached to your assignment. Assignments without the citation sheet will be reduced a letter grade.
  - If you’re not sure, ask me, not another student (they may be wrong). I don’t bite. I like having students come to my office to talk—about anything and everything.

A NOTE ON RESEARCH SOURCES: Wikipedia, Answers.com, Ask Yahoo!, Quora, About.com and all similar, unverified, user-generated sites are generally not acceptable research sources, although they are often good places to start looking for ideas. Don’t be lazy and quote the first one or two things that pop up on Google. Use the library resources available to you—you paid for them—and your research will be more meaningful to you and your clients and will most likely result in a better grade. Do not depend solely on Internet research—the Willis Library has lots of dead tree media and other awesome resources.

Doug Campbell is the librarian assigned to the Mayborn School of Journalism. He periodically holds office hours in the GAB (often tweeting his location). Use him for ANY research help or copyright questions. There’s a reason he was honored this past year. His email is doug.campbell@unt.edu and his Twitter is @Ask_UNTDoug.

Citation of online sources must follow the format from the Purdue Online Writing Lab, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/10/ and must be complete. Raw links will not be accepted as citations or bibliography entries. Links in blog posts must be embedded in anchor text.
Course Evaluation

*This is a rough outline of criteria expected for specific grades in this course:*

A – All elements required are included. Neat appearance. Correct document format. AP style, no typos, misspelling, careless errors, quotes correct. College level writing with clear concise paragraphs - one thought per paragraph. Demonstrates mastery of related PR concepts.

*Document is ready to present to a PR Manager for final review and could be released without corrections or with a few corrections.*

B – Writing is not concise or clear and contains multiple corrections.

*Document has not been edited or corrected and it not ready for review.*

C – Document does not meet PR standards for a finished product - missing elements, format, appearance, contains AP style, errors, immature writing and does not indicate mastery of related PR concepts. Document is careless, missing elements or unfinished, and not acceptable as a final work project.

D – Nothing about the document is acceptable as a final work product.

### Grading System—Based on a percentage of 1,000 possible points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90% and above</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>900 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% - 89.9%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>800 – 899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% - 79.9%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>700 – 799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% - 70.9%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>600 – 699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 599</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Grading Summary*:

* Assignment and point assigned can be adjusted based on class progress.

#### Exams/Final Project: 250 points

- Midterm Exam includes Strategy and Tactics, AP style and grammar - 100
- Final Quiz - 50
- Portfolio (online and hard copy) - 100

#### Major Project Assignments: 500 points

- Fact Sheet with design, message and brand components - 50
- Feature Story with photo and caption/video - 70
- Persuasion Key Message Evaluation - 30
- Crisis Communication Drill - 50
- Infographic/Position Paper/Single Subject Fact Sheet - 50
- Two Media Release Packages (Release, Pitch, Advisory, Email components) - 150
- Nonprofit Media Release with Media List - 100

#### In class assignments: 250 points

- Self-Intro -10
- Resume - 20
- Media Release/New Story Analysis Blog – 30
- Persuasion - 20
- Customer Problem – 20
- Memo/Letter/Email - 20
Speaker Evaluation/Best Practice - 30
Agenda/Speech - 20
Mini Feature (Speaker) - 20
Q/A, Backgrounder, Talking Points -20
Chunking -20
Evaluation or Assignments TBD or applied to other class assignments - 20

**Selected Nonprofit:**

My approval of your selected nonprofit is required. It is expected that your interactions with the nonprofit demonstrate professional integrity and courtesy. You will complete the client agreement letter, get it signed, and bring it to class on the due date.

---

**Blackboard Gradebook**

Grades posted in the Blackboard gradebook reflect points accrued for each project graded online. All individual project grades may not be recorded in the Blackboard gradebook. Weighting of assignments, quizzes, attendance, and class participation are not included until the end of the semester. Total points accrued in Blackboard may not be a true reflection of your potential or actual grade in this course. Because of the large number of students I have in all my classes, I will not do individual grade calculations on demand. You are responsible for keeping track of your graded assignments and track your progress in this course. Grade appeals on individual assignments must be made in writing within seven days of the returned work.

---

**IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH COURSE CONTENT AT ANY TIME, MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE ME. IF YOU ARE HAVING ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO COMPLETE YOUR COURSE WORK, CONTACT ME IMMEDIATELY. THE JOURNALISM ADVISING OFFICE OR THE COUNSELING CENTER CAN HELP, BUT WE’RE TALKING TO SOMEBODY ABOUT A PROBLEM WHEN IT FIRST APPEARS IS PREFERABLE TO WAITING UNTIL THINGS IMPLODE AND IT’S TOO LATE FOR US TO MAKE ACCOMMODATIONS. THERE ARE MANY RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS TO ASSIST YOU IN SUCCEEDING.**
ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Mayborn School of Journalism Academic Integrity 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 18.1.16 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, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety, specifically for this class. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement and similar uses of other people’s work are unacceptable. You are expected to conform to the university Student Code of Conduct: www.unt.edu/csrr.

My policy on Academic Honesty

Any incidence of academic dishonesty will result in a “Zero” for the assignment and may result in an automatic “F” in the class. Work that has been previously written for personal blogs or other classes (past or present), including blog posts, articles or publications, may not be submitted for credit in this class even if it is your original work. Copying large portions of text from any source, even with attribution, may also be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. If in doubt, ask me (not another student). Suspected incidences of cheating of any kind on work for group projects will result in sanctions being levied against all group members.

Final Note

I come across as a tough old broad but it’s because I’m trying to prepare you for the intensely competitive career you’ve chosen. I’m here to help you, and I care deeply about all my students. I have more than 25 years of professional PR experience and many professional contacts in the industry. Come see me any time, about anything, and if I can help, I will. If you can’t meet me in my office, I will meet with you at a mutually convenient time and location, by phone or Skype. My ultimate goal is to see you succeed in class, in life, and to inspire you to greatness.

Syllabus © 2016 by Samra Jones Bufkins, MJ, APR.
JOUR 3420 Fall 2016 Weekly Class Schedule*
*(I will be re-formatting this as a table)*

- **READINGS:** Readings are to be completed before class. Readings will be announced in Blackboard.
- **RESEARCH AND CLASS PARTICPATION:** All students are expected to provide in class examples for in class discussions.

**WEEK 1**
**T 8/30**
**Discussion:** Syllabus and Weekly Class Schedule Overview
**In Class Assignments:** Personal Information Sheets, Self Intro (three sentences)

**TH 9/1**
**Discussion:** Public Relations Overview, Writing and Research for PR, Ethics, TARES, Overview of PR – digital and traditional
**Assignment:** Resume, Class Contract and LinkedIn profile.

**WEEK 2**
**T 9/6**
**Discussion:** Overview, Public Relations Perspectives -Agency, Organizational PR Consultant, Introductory PR concepts – Planning, Research, Communication, Evaluation; What makes a Good Client
**Action:** Identify client then get Blackboard approval for client

**TH 9/8**
**Discussion:** Emails, Memo, Letters.
**Reading:** Email Memo Letter Handout
**In Class Assignment:** Email, Memo, Letter for Nonprofit

**WEEK 3**
**T 9/13**
**Reading:** Pps 225—233, 240
**Action:** Meet with Nonprofit and finalize agreement
**In-class Assignment:** Customer Service issue

**TH 9/15**
**Reading:** Chapter 2 through page 35
**Assignment:** Press Release/Media Coverage Evaluation
**Action:** Final meeting with nonprofit

**WEEK 4**
**T 9/20**
**Discussion:** Review Nonprofit features, visual news elements
**Assignment:** Feature with visual elements and a PR approach
**Deadline:** Nonprofit Selected

**TH 9/22**
**Discussion:** Theories of Persuasion Strategy and Tactics, Audience - Summary
**Reading Due:** Persuasion/ Strategy and Tactics Module
**Assignment:** Persuasion used with PR campaign Strategy

**WEEK 5**
**T 9/27**
**Reading:** TBA
**Class Presentation:** Persuasion

**TH 9/29**
**Discussion:** Narrative writing for features, Repackaging for multiple PR work products

**WEEK 6**
**T 10/4**
**Speaker:** June Bug Clark, UNT Photography Consultant
**Reading:** Pps 37--42
**In-Class Assignment:** Mini Feature with soft news elements (hyperlinks, For More Information, pull quotes)
TH 10/6
Assignment: Nonprofit Fact Sheet

WEEK 7
T 10/11
Speaker: Public Relations Professional
In-Class Activity: Speaker will review fact sheets for design elements
TH 10/13
Discussion: Citations and Infographic
Assignment: Infographic

WEEK 8
T 10/17
Deadline: Feature Due,
In-Class Assignment: Feature Edit
TH 10/20
Midterm Exam

WEEK 9
T 10/25
Discussion: Writing/Repackaging for the Internet
Assignment Due: Chunk Feature
TH 10/27
Discussion: Crisis Communication Overview
Assignment: WEEKEND Crisis Communication Drill

WEEK 10
T 11/1
Reading: Chapter 13
Speaker: Lyle Gensler, Public Information Officer, Grand Prairie Police Department
In Class Assignment: Best Practices Speaker Evaluation
TH 11/13
Reading: pps 42—47 and Chapter 8
Discussion: Finding and Creating News, Audience
Activity: Media Release Package One (Event release, Twitter)

WEEK 11
T 11/8
Discussion: Agenda
In Class Assignment: Agenda and opening speech.
TH 11/10
Speaker: (pitching) or reporter best practice assignment
Assignment: TBA

WEEK 12
T 11/15
Assignment: Media Release Package Two with three reporter email pitches and Media Advisory (product assignment and reporter pitches)
TH 11/17
Discussion: Media Distribution
Assignment: Media Release Three - your nonprofit
In Class Assignment: Earned Media

WEEK 13
T 11/22
In Class Assignment: Media Prep (Q&A, Backgrounder, Talking Points)
TH 11/24
No class: Happy Thanksgiving

WEEK 14
T 11/29
Discussion: Portfolio, business cards, Final work assignments
The “Fine Print” (or, stuff we have to include and you probably should read.)

MSOJ Syllabus Statements

Add the following wording verbatim (use own words in highlighted sections) to your syllabi:

JOURNALISM REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES

JOURNALISM COURSE REGISTRATION

1. Registration will begin on the dates noted in the schedule of classes each semester. The system is a live, first come/first serve program.

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 haven’t 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 advisor.

3. A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed the GSP test, all foundational courses, and Math 1680/1681. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.

RE-TAKING FAILED JOURNALISM CLASSES

Students will not be allowed to automatically take 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 one calendar year after the date you received the second failing grade. Once a student has waited one calendar year after failing a course twice, the student may submit a written appeal to the director to be approved to enroll a third time. Students will not be allowed to re-take a failed journalism course more than three times.

TEXTBOOK POLICY

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn’t require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

FIRST CLASS DAY ATTENDANCE

Journalism instructors reserve the right to drop any student who does not attend the first class day of the semester.

ATTENDANCE

One absence in the course is the limit without penalty toward your final grade, unless you have communicated with me from the beginning about an extraordinary problem. Coming to class late or leaving early may constitute an absence for that day. This is a seminar course, and it requires your attendance and participation each class meeting.

FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) UNDERGRADUATES

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per semester. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose financial aid eligibility. If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so has the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. Please visit http://financial.aid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with your MSOJ academic advisor or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

ACADEMIC ADVISING
All first-time-in-college students at UNT are required to schedule an appointment with their Academic Advisor and receive an advising code to register for classes both fall and spring semesters of the first year in college. ALL students should meet with their Academic Advisor at least one time per long semester (Fall & Spring). It is important to update your degree plan on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track for a timely graduation.

- It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. **Please check your online schedule daily through late registration to ensure you have not been dropped for non-payment of any amount.** Students unknowingly have been dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, parking fees, etc. MSOJ will not be able to reinstate students for any reason after late registration, regardless of situation. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

**IMPORTANT DATES FOR FALL 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 29</td>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 12</td>
<td>Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 5</td>
<td>Labor Day (no classes; university closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Beginning this date a student who wishes to drop a course must first receive written consent of the instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Last day for student to receive automatic grade of W for nonattendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 7</td>
<td>Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the semester with a grade of W for courses that the student is not passing. After this date, a grade of WF may be recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Beginning this date instructors may drop students with a grade of WF for nonattendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 7</td>
<td>Last day for a student to drop a course with consent of the instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 14</td>
<td>Beginning this date, a student who qualifies may request an Incomplete, with a grade of I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 23</td>
<td>Last day for an instructor to drop a student with a grade of WF for nonattendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 24-27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break (no classes, university closed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Last Regular Class Meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>Reading Day (no classes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 10-15</td>
<td>Final Exams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 16</td>
<td>End of term.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the step outlined below:

1. Individual Faculty Member/Advisor
2. Director, Mayborn School of Journalism
3. Dean, Mayborn School of Journalism

**OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**
The University of North Texas and the Mayborn School of Journalism make reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at [http://www.unt.edu/oda](http://www.unt.edu/oda). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

### COURSE SAFETY STATEMENTS

Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use property safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the UNT Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or exams; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, the acquisition of tests or other material belonging to a faculty member, dual submission of a paper or project, resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructors, or any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. Plagiarism includes the paraphrase or direct quotation of published or unpublished works without full and clear acknowledgment of the author/source. Academic dishonesty will bring about disciplinary action which may include expulsion from the university. This is explained in the UNT Student Handbook. Individual faculty should include penalties for academic dishonesty in their courses here.

---

**In my classes, the minimum penalty for cheating is a grade of “zero” on the assignment. A grade of “F” in the course is a more likely penalty. Where cheating is suspected on a group project, the entire group may be held responsible.**

---

### MSOJ ACADEMIC INTEGRITY 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 18.1.16 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.

### CLASSROOM POLICIES

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html](http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html).

The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

### STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT)

Student Perceptions of Teaching (Spot) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available towards the end of the semester to provide students a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. Please look for the email in your UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete your survey. Once you complete the survey you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the spot website at [www.spot.unt.edu](http://www.spot.unt.edu) or email spot@unt.edu.
**FINAL EXAM POLICY**

Final exams will be administered at the designated times during the final week of each long semester and during the specified day of each summer term. Please check the course calendar early in the semester to avoid any schedule conflicts.

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the my.unt.edu site [www.my.unt.edu](http://www.my.unt.edu). If you do not regularly check EagleConnect or link it to your favorite e-mail account, please do so, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. The website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward your email: [http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/](http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/)

**COURSES IN A BOX**

Any MSOJ equivalent course from another university must receive prior approval from the MSOJ academic advisor to insure that all MSOJ degree plan requirements are met. For example, courses that are taken online or from a program that offers course material via CD, booklet, or other manner of correspondence must have prior advisor approval.

**EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at [www.my.unt.edu](http://www.my.unt.edu). Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.