

SMSU Spring 2014
SPCH 260 Introduction to Public Relations Writing

Instructor: Sharron M. Hope, Ph.D.

Instructor Contact Information

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Tuesday & Thursday 1:00-4:00 p.m. Also available by appointment.

Description

This course is designed to help students develop the professional-level writing skills expected of beginning public relations practitioners, emphasizing the different approaches required for particular audiences and media.

Required Text

Wilcox, D., and Reber, B.H. (2013) *Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques*, 7th ed. Boston: Pearson.

Recommended Text

The Associated Press Stylebook (most current).

Learning Outcomes

The primary goal of this class is for you to develop expertise in writing texts common in the public relations industry. The lectures, activities and assignments in this course are designed to help you achieve the following learning outcomes:

- To create effective work products by writing clear, concise copy in a variety of styles for different audiences
- To locate and use reliable sources of information in the preparation of accurate and effective work products
- To critically evaluate public relations situations and determine an appropriate course of action
- To apply theories and core concepts of ethical public relations in preparing strategies and work products

Expectations

- As a budding communication professional, you will be held to professional writing standards. Your grade will be substantially lowered for each error in fact, grammar, punctuation and spelling, so be sure to proofread your work carefully. There are online and on-campus resources to help you improve in these areas.
- Reading assignments will be completed before class so that you can participate in discussion and activities related to that material.
- Be prepared to write every day. To prepare you for a world of tight deadlines, you will be expected to complete some assignments during class.
- Be sure to place your name in the top right corner of all assignments along with the assignment title and the date. These should be single-spaced. This requirement includes assignments posted to D2L.
- **Unless otherwise specified, your writing copy should be double-spaced with one-inch margins in size 10 Times New Roman font or size 11 Calibri.** (FYI: This document uses size 10 Calibri.)
- Some assignments will have a word limit, others will not. When applicable, word requirements should be observed. Assignments significantly over or under the word limit will be penalized a letter grade.
- For most assignments, you will upload work to D2L. For others, you will upload work to D2L **and** provide me with a hard copy of computer-generated text.
- Chronic misuse of the computer for activities other than class work (Facebook, email, etc.) will reduce your final grade.
- You are unavailable to others during class. Cell phones and other electronic devices should not be used unless for assignments. These devices should be shut off and stowed, not on the work station.

(more)

Attendance and Absences

- You are expected to attend class and to be on time. Chronic tardiness or absenteeism is not appreciated in school or in the workplace and will affect your final grade.
- The **only excused absences are for a bona fide SMSU event**, such as a field trip for another class, a university-sanctioned club conference, or participation in an SMSU sporting event.
- Each student will have three unexcused absences to use for illness, attending family events, and so on. **Four or more unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your final grade.**
- As a courtesy to me and the rest of the class, please text, email or phone if you will be absent.

Late Work

- Late work is not accepted and will receive a zero.
- Assignments that are due should be posted to D2L **before** class time, otherwise they are considered late. Hard copy assignments are due at the start of class.
- Requests for extensions on assignment due dates **may** be granted, depending on circumstances. The request must be in writing, and include a justification for the extension. Requests should be made before the original assignment due date.

Rewrites

We learn by doing, receiving feedback, and then doing over. Some assignments will include revisions. For those assignments that do not, **revisions for grades below a B will be accepted within one week of the instructor's return of the original assignment.** Rewrites should be hard copies, with a copy of the original work with my comments stapled to the revised assignment. Grades can be increased by no more than one letter grade and no higher than a B. (For example, a grade of D could be raised to a C, but a C+ could only be raised to a B).

Academic Honesty

Students will be expected to abide by the SMSU Academic Honesty Policy. Plagiarism is not tolerated and will result in the failure of the class. If you use content from already published materials of any kind, you must get permission for such use and give credit to the source.

Student Assistance and Special Needs

Students often times need assistance, but are reluctant to take advantage of the services offered at the university designed to help them succeed in school. If you are having an academic problem, please talk to me and we will try to find a solution or a campus resource that can help you. If you have a need for special accommodations, as documented through the Academic and Diversity Resources, please inform me so the necessary accommodations can be arranged.

On Campus Resources

My goal is that you will be able to communicate more clearly in writing after this course. I will be happy to help you achieve that goal in any way I can. Stop by during office hours or schedule an appointment. If you have a quick question, text, call or email me. The **writing lab** is also a resource that can help you with chronic writing issues, such as organization, punctuation and grammar. Please make use of the help that is available.

Grading

Final course grades will be based on the following scale:

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100.0-96.67% = A+	89.99-86.67% = B+	79.99-76.67% = C+	69.99-66.67% = D+
96.66-93.34% = A	86.66-83.34% = B	76.66-73.34% = C	66.66-63.34% = D
93.33-90.00% = A-	83.33-80.00% = B-	73.33-70.00% = C-	63.33-60.00% = D-

(more)

Assignments:

17%	Exams (midterm & final)
40%	Writing assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research Findings Report• News releases (3)• Business letters (3)• Brochure• Blog (includes proposal, weekly postings, reflection paper)
5%	In-class activities/assignments
5%	Homework activities/assignments
30%	Final project Media Kit (includes additional brochure, letter, news release, other materials)
<u>3%</u>	Attendance, attitude, attention
100%	

DISCLAIMER Subject-to-change statement:

This syllabus and class schedule are tentative and subject to change according to the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be announced in class. All due dates listed in the schedule are tentative.

(more)

SPCH 260 INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING
SMSU Spring 2014 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE
 Instructor: Sharron M. Hope, Ph.D.

Wk	Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
1	1/13 M	Intro to course		
	1/15 W	Writing and PR: Getting Organized	Ch 1	Assign Research Findings
	1/17 F	Becoming a Persuasive Writer	Ch 2	
2	1/20 M	No Class – MLK Jr Day		
	1/22 W	Research findings critique		Research Findings draft due Bring 5 copies.
	1/24 F	Finding and Making News	Ch 3	
3	1/27 M	News vs. PR	Ch 5 Sunday Tribune	Bring Sunday Tribute to class
	1/29 W	Writing the News Release: Basics		
	1/31 F	Headings & Leads		DUE: Research Findings
4	2/3 M	Online releases		Assign News Releases
	2/5 W	News release critiques		Drafts of news releases. Bring 5 copies.
	2/7 F	No Class – Faculty meetings		
5	2/10 M	Tapping the Web & Digital Media	Ch 12	DUE: News releases
	2/12 W	Social Media		
	2/14 F			
6	2/17 M	No Class - President's Day		
	2/19 W	Blog idea presentations/discussion		DUE: Blog proposals
	2/21 F	Working with Journalists & Bloggers	Ch 4	
7	2/24 M	Preparing Fact Sheets, Advisories...	Ch 6	DUE: First blog posting
	2/26 W	Preparing...Media Kits...		Assign writing exam questions
	2/28 F	Media kit assignment	D2L	Assign Media Kits
8	3/3 M	Preparing...Pitches		DUE: Exam questions
	3/5 W	Review for exam		Assign newsletter sample
	3/7 F	Midterm Exam		
9	3/10-14	No Class- Spring Break		
10	3/17 M	Newsletters	Ch 13	DUE: Newsletter samples
	3/19 W	Brochures		DUE: Media kit proposals
	3/21 F	Brochure assignment		Assign brochure
11	3/24 M	Blog critique		
	3/26 W	No Class – Advising Day		
	3/28 F	Brochure critique		Drafts of brochure. Bring 5 copies.
12	3/31 M			
	4/2 W	Brochure presentations		DUE: Brochure
	4/4 F	No Class – work on media kits		
13	4/7 M	No Class – work on media kits		
	4/9 W	Writing email		
	4/11 F	Writing memos & letters		Assign business letters

Wk	Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
14	4/14 M	Business letter critiques		Drafts of business letters. Bring 5 copies.
	4/16 W			
	4/18 F			DUE: Business letters
15	4/21 M	Media kit critiques		Drafts of media kit. Bring 3 copies of print materials.
	4/23 W	Direct mail	Ch 16	
	4/25 F			
16	4/28 M	Discussion of blogging experience		DUE: Blogging reflection paper
	4/30 W	Media kit presentations/discussion		DUE: Media kits
	5/2 F	Class wrap-up. Review for final.		
	5/6 Tues	Final Exam 12 Noon		
	5/10 Sat	Commencement		

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