PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING—COMM 335
SPRING 2011 (Term 111)
MWF 11 A.M. (MAYBANK 110) AND NOON (MAYBANK 111)

INSTRUCTOR: Patrick Harwood, Department of Communication
OFFICE: R.S. Small Building, Room 126—If dropping off work, please slide it under my office door. Please note: Homework is never accepted by email.
PHONE: 953-2212 (downtown office); 224-3112(cell)- OK to text my cell number
FAX (Communication Department): 953-7037
E-MAIL: harwoodp@cofc.edu
COURSE WEBSITE: www.harwoodp.people.cofc.edu
OFFICE HOURS: MWF 1-1:50 p.m. and TR 1:30-2:30 p.m.


Course Objectives
The primary goal of this course is for students to develop practical PR writing skills while generating a broad awareness and knowledge of how PR is integrated into marketing and communications programs. More specifically, you will:

- Build on the concepts learned about public relations in previous classes
- Translate concepts into concrete, written works.
- Develop writing skills tailored specifically for the public relations profession
- Evaluate various channels for effective public relations opportunities and develop writing skills for various outlets
- Gain a broader understanding of the profession with an emphasis on how and why public relations are integrated into an organization’s marketing and communications strategy
- Apply the textbook and classroom discussion to “real world” public relations situations by discussing headlines and issues of the day
- Tap into current communication technology for producing and disseminating news releases, newsletters and websites
- Develop a professional portfolio of writing samples to show prospective employers (save all the news releases and other work for this)

Attendance Policy
Please be in class on time! Coming in late is very distracting and doing it repeatedly will demonstrate poor planning and inconsideration on your part. Roll will be taken each day. Five unexcused absences will result in an automatic final grade deduction of half a letter grade. Repeated tardiness will also be noted and could affect your final grade.
**Exams**

There are two exams - a midterm and a final. Each exam covers content covered in the textbook. The exams may also test your knowledge of key concepts of writing, including AP Style, as well as PR tactics, strategies and theories. A study guide will be posted on our class website one week before each exam. The exams will be a combination of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, Associated Press writing style, and PR-type writing, such as news releases.

Exam grading scale: A 94-100; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-77; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 64-66; D- 60-63; F—59 and below

**Homework and Quizzes**

Homework will be assigned with the book chapters, specifically the Skill Building Activities at the end of each chapter. These papers must be typed and double-spaced and should show comprehension of material, accuracy and creativity. There may be unannounced quizzes related to chapters in the book after they are assigned for you to read.

**Cougar Volunteer Spirit Website Project**

For several years my PR students and I have produced two original websites. One is called Focus on the Faculty that features C of C faculty research and expertise. The second one is Cougar Volunteer Spirit, a website that highlights students involved in community service and volunteer work. In this class, we will be updating and redesigning this second website.

**Final Grade Determination**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm and Final Exams</td>
<td>40 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book homework, quizzes and other assignments</td>
<td>25 percent</td>
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<td>(use check plus, check, check minus grading system for these)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cougar Volunteer Spirit Article(s)</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>End-of-semester portfolio (to be detailed)***</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newsletter Project</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and attendance</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>***Save everything you do in this class: all homework and projects (on computer)</td>
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**Final Grades:** A (Superior)=4.0; A-=3.7; B+ (Very Good)=3.3; B (Good)=3.0; B-=2.7; C+ (Fair)=2.3; C=2.0; C-=1.7; D+=1.3; D ( Barely Acceptable/Passing)=1.0; D-=.70; F (Failure)=0.0

**Extra Credit Opportunities**

You can have points added to your test scores by writing news releases on communication and media-related speakers and events at the College of Charleston and around Charleston this semester. You can also do extra CVS articles. Up to three points can be added to your lowest test score per extra credit. Maximum three such pieces per student (meaning you can earn up to nine extra credit points). These can be turned in up to the final class.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Please note about this schedule: This is often updated before each class so be aware that this schedule changes from the one you may print early in the term. Specific homework for each chapter is listed but is subject to change. Assignments will be posted a day or two before each class. I will go through this schedule each class so you are clear what is due and when. If you are absent be sure to check this online schedule to see what is coming up, what the homework is, etc.

Note: Monday, Jan. 24 is the last day for 90 percent refund if you withdraw and Monday, March 14 is last day to withdraw with a “W” mark.

Week 1—January 10 (Monday’s class cancelled due to weather)
- Course introduction; syllabus; student info sheets; introduce Cougar Volunteer Spirit website project
- Wednesday—Preview Chapter 1, “Getting Organized for Writing”
- **Homework for Friday, Jan. 14:**
  - Read Chapter 1, “Getting Organized for Writing”
  - Complete Skill Building Activity Nos. 4 and 5 on p. 32 (all such papers should be typed and double-spaced)
- Discuss Student Profile article/release (pattern after Student Profiles on the C of C homepage). On Friday, you will be matched with a student during class and given time to talk to each other and to exchange phone/email.
- **Homework for Wednesday, Jan. 20:** Each student writes a 250-plus word article with quotes about another student in this class.
  - Scenario is that this is running as part of CofC printed and online material for prospective students and their parents
  - Use CofC’s Student Profile as a template (see school’s homepage) or something similar to give article a professional “camera ready” look
  - Article should have at least three direct quotes from your student
  - Include a photograph of your student also in your layout- coordinate this with your student
  - Keep tone of story positive and upbeat
  - Keep paragraphs short
  - For layout, use this template: http://www.harwoodp.people.cofc.edu/WMMCougarCallNewsletterTemplate.doc
  - It’s OK to have your student review piece before it’s “published”

Week 2—January 17 (no class Monday, MLK holiday)
- **Wednesday—Student Profile releases due—discuss, review, collect**
- Review News Release formatting
- Preview and outline the SGA Adopt-A-Street news release
- **Homework for Friday, Jan. 21:** Type/write/format SGA Adopt-A-Street news release (follow proper News Release format; see writing tips, p. 135)
• Friday—Peer review Adopt-A-Street release and preview Chapter 2, “Becoming a Persuasive Writer”
• **Homework for Monday, Jan. 24:**
  o Read Chapter 2, “Becoming a Persuasive Writer”
  o Complete one of the Skill Building Activities: No. 2, 3, 4 or 5 on p. 59
  o Put response(s) in form of a professional memo or proposal with company letterhead (can be from your own PR firm)
  o Also- revise your “Cougar Call”-style feature—make suggested and other improvements from me and your subject. Turn in updated copy and attach first version behind it

**Week 3— January 24**
• This week: Continue Chapter 2, “Becoming a Persuasive Writer” and then Chapter 3, “Avoiding Legal Hassles”
• Monday: Return Adopt-A-Street releases—go over issues/notes (posted) and look at best releases (posted)
• Go over Chapter 2 homework (groups maybe)
• **Homework for Wednesday, Jan. 26**
  o Revise your Adopt-A-Street release- turn in new copy with first one attached in back
  o Also, do Chapter 2, Skill Building Activity 1 on p. 59. Review pages 48-53 and create a proposal for the College of Charleston’s president George Benson on how these persuasion tactics/techniques can be used to the make his case to the legislature and taxpaying public to not make any budget cuts. Put on CofC letterhead—you are the school’s director of communications and governmental affairs
• Wednesday: Discuss homework due today; examine recent CofC president’s op-ed pieces about construction and tuition
• Review the Public Relations Society of America’s Code of Ethics (posted)
• Friday: Chapter 3 Powerpoint, “Avoiding Legal Hassles”
• **Homework for Monday, Jan. 31:**
  o Read Chapter 3, “Avoiding Legal Hassles”
  o Complete one of the three Skill Building Activities, p. 89-90
  o Put response(s) in form of a professional memo or proposal with company letterhead (can be from your own PR firm)

**Week 4—January 31**
• Monday—review and collect Chapter 3 homework due today
• Start to discuss Cougar Volunteer Spirit website
• A Facebook site has been established: to find search Cougar Volunteer Spirit
• Brainstorm people and organizations we can contact for student nominations
• **Homework for Wednesday, Feb. 2:** Design and write a Cougar Volunteer Spirit Pitch Letter using the current CVS logo in your letterhead. This letter will be emailed to the campus community and sent to key people on and off campus. In the Pitch Letter:
• Introduce yourself and describe what the Cougar Volunteer Spirit website is all about, as far as featuring CofC students involved in public service and volunteer work.
• Say you are seeking nominations of students who can be included on this website.
• Be sure to include the web address for CVS at www.cofc.edu/~volunteerspirit
• Your pitch letter must include a full or partial quote from Victor Wilson, the college’s student affairs senior vice president.
• At the end write your name, phone number and email address, and say that you hope to hear back soon.
• This letter should not exceed one page- it should be in the 150-200 word range.

Wednesday: Preview Chapter 4, “Finding and Making News”
Also Wednesday: Return CVS Pitch Letters; discuss finalizing and emailing/mailing them.

Homework for Friday, Feb. 4:
• Read Chapter 4, “Finding and Making News”
• From the Skill Building Activities on p. 117, do one of the first five. We’ll do No. 6 in class Friday
• Put response(s) in form of a professional memo or proposal with company letterhead (can be from your own PR firm)
• Also revise and turn in CVS Pitch Letters.

Homework for Monday, Feb. 7: Through your Facebook site, send a message to your CofC friends about our Cougar Volunteer Spirit project. Ask for suggestions of students we can feature- students actively involved in community service, volunteer work, etc. Turn in something on paper to indicate that you sent such a message. If you don’t have Facebook, then send an email to CofC friends and/or make an announcement in your classes today or Monday.

Week 5—February 7
• Monday: Turn in Facebook CVS announcement
• PowerPoint: Chapter 5, “Writing the News Release”
• Homework for Wednesday, Feb. 9:
  • Read Ch. 5, “Writing the News Release”
  • Complete Skill Building Activities 1 and 4 on p. 139-140
  • Put news release on separate paper from No. 1 exercise
  • Pick a CofC club or organization from Student Life’s listing: http://studentlife.cofc.edu/clubs-and-organizations/index.php
  • Be sure to include enough background information on the speaker and boilerplate about the club sponsoring the talk at the end of the release. Do not exceed one page.
Wednesday:  Discuss Egyptian Google’s execs role in nation’s uprising; look at GE CEO speaking at CofC news release; collect Campus Speaker News Release; conduct peer reviews; discuss Friday’s CVS flyer creation assignment; look at new CVS article template

Homework for Friday, Feb. 11:
- Design a Cougar Volunteer Spirit promotional flyer that can be posted around campus and sent to key contacts.
- The purpose is to attract student volunteer nominations
- You can put yourself as the contact person or include our Facebook site at Cougar Volunteer Spirit
- Be creative with design—try for an appealing look that would lead people on campus to stop and look at it
- Don’t forget the basic information such as the current CVS web address, and your contact info

Homework for Monday, Feb. 14:
- Write a one-page news release about how nominations are being sought for the 2011 Cougar Volunteer Spirit website.
  - Put on CVS letterhead
  - Make sure all key news release elements are included
  - Include a quote from Student Affairs Senior Vice President Victor Wilson
  - Include mention of the current website and our Facebook site
  - Put yourself as the contact/for more information person
  - Don’t make AP Style mistakes!
  - Bring your AP Style book to class Monday***

Week 6—February 14
- Monday: Chapter 6, “Preparing Fact Sheets, Advisories, Media Kits and Pitches”
- Monday: In-class copy edit for AP Style (handout)
- Homework for Wednesday, Feb. 16:
  - Read Chapter 6, “Preparing Fact Sheets, etc…”
  - Skill Building Activities on p. 161—do Nos. 2 and 3—produce professional looking and sounding/reading Media Alert/Advisories and Pitch Letters
- CVS update—start to put together a list of nominated students
- Writing Feature/Profile Articles—go over web posting
- Review several current FOF articles and similar features currently on the C of C news site
- Wednesday:
  - Chapter 7, “Creating News Features and Op-Ed”
- Discuss Chapter 7 homework—“Cougar Close-Up” article
- Discuss layout, design, topics
- Friday we will randomly select partners and you will interview each other during class (like we did before)
- See Cougar Volunteer Spirit for layout ideas at www.cofc.edu/~volunteerspirit

- **Homework for Friday, Feb. 18:**
  - Type an update on your CVS student nominations efforts—list one or more students who you think would be good for our CVS website
  - Also include this information: His/her volunteer/community/public service, how long involved with this, previous service work.
  - Also include his/her phone number and email address

- Also, read Chapter 7 and think about how you will do your feature interview on Friday: what will be the questions and angle of your feature piece? Think about the design elements too, and securing a photo over the weekend from your person

- **Friday:** During class you will interview a fellow student for a second CofC student profile—article format is different than first one

- **Homework for Monday, Feb. 21:**
  - Prepare your “Cougar Close-Up” feature on a fellow student in the class. Include a photo of your student. Design piece in a bullet point style or as a Q&A. Have at least 10 questions. Call the piece “10 Questions” if like that title. Or come up with your own title. Topics should include basic background such as hometown, major, year, post-graduation aspirations (dream job?), plus comments about news of the day
  - NEWS VIEWS—College of Charleston Students Voice Their Opinions (another possible name for this feature)
  - Format this piece differently than the first fellow student feature from weeks ago
  - Arrange to get a good picture or two from your student

**Week 7—February 21**

- **Monday, Feb. 21:** “News Views”/“Cougar Close-Up” due today (Ch. 7 homework)
- Review new student articles
- Go over CVS Guidelines and Deadlines (posted)
- PowerPoint: Chapter 8, “Selecting Publicity and Photos and Graphics”
- **Homework for Wednesday, Feb. 23:**
  - Read Chapter 8, “Selecting Publicity Photos/Graphics”
  - Do Skill Building Activities Nos. 1 AND 2 (p. 206-7)
- Do this professionally, listing your ideas on your PR agency letterhead. Address it to a prospective new client who is interested in your agency’s photographic expertise
- Wednesday—review posted Midterm Exam Study Guide (Ch. 1-8)
- Distribute Midterm Exam Writing Portion
- Discuss Copy Edit part of test which will be done during class on Monday.

Week 8—February 28
- **Monday—Midterm Exam Copy Edit/AP Style portion today—in class— you’ll be given half the class period to complete this**
- **Wednesday, March 2—Midterm Exam—also turn in the news release, pitch letter and media alert that are part of the test**

Week 9—Spring Break Week—No Classes
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Week 10—March 14
- Return and review Midterm Exams
- Update on CVS articles—first draft is due next Monday, March 21
  - Make arrangements to interview your CVS student this week and to take or attain photo(s) of him or her
- Have students enter e-mail addresses on Blogger
- Discuss CVS website software and design elements
- Wednesday: Chapter 9, “Writing for Radio and Television”
- **Homework for Friday, March 18: (read guidelines below)**
  - Read Chapter 9, “Writing for Radio and Television”
  - Complete Activities 2 and 4 on page 248—make these professional looking on appropriate business letterhead
  - For No. 2, Writing an Audio News Release, see format guideline on last page of Chapter 9’s PowerPoint and review pages 212-215
  - Put on letterhead from CofC’s International Education and Programs office
  - For your ANR, make up a soundbite (quote) from Andrew Sobiesuo, CofC’s director of International Education and Programs or from a student who has studied abroad
  - For No. 4, your SMT memo should come from you as the National Coalition of Student Health’s public relations director (or from your own PR agency which is bidding to organize this SMT) and should be addressed to the organization’s Executive Committee. Use appropriate letterhead.
  - Review pages 234-239 on SMTs
  - Keep in mind where your SMT would originate, who your spokesperson would be, what the newsworthy message(s) would be that would make the media want to do your SMT, and how you would promote it to the media nationally
• Friday: Go over ANRs written for today and how to produce them on computer
• Get updates on CVS interviews—everyone will be asked for a progress report
• Discuss CVS articles due Monday- go over steps to publishing the article and photo to our Cougar Volunteer Spirit blog
• **Homework for Monday, March 21:**
  - Turn in hard copy of your CVS article in proper format as discussed in class. OK to also post on our CVS blog—you’ve been sent an e-mail adding you as a publisher

**Week 11—March 21**
- **Monday:** CVS articles due today
- Do peer review with CVS articles
- **Wednesday:**
  - Return CVS articles with comments. Revised pieces due on Monday- printed version and blog posting—for letter grade
  - Preview Chapter 10, “Distributing News to the Media”
- **Homework for Friday, March 25:**
  - Complete Skill Building Activity 1 on page 271—list at least 10 magazines that reach women ages 18-35. Do this in the form of a memo to a specific sunscreen company from your PR agency or the company itself (this is a portfolio item)
  - **Also,** answer Question 2 on page 271— incorporate this response into your memo for Activity 1 (above)
- **Friday:** Chapter 11, “Getting Along with Journalists”
- **Homework for Monday, March 28:**
  - Read Chapter 11, “Getting Along with Journalists”
  - Your memo should be addressed to Target’s Vice President of Corporate Communications. Can come from you as a Target corporate communications staffer or from your own PR agency that has been hired to organize this news conference.
  - Target’s corporate headquarters: Minneapolis, Minn.
- **Homework for Monday, March 28:**
  - Revised CVS pieces due on Monday- printed version and blog posting—for letter grade

**Week 12—March 28**
- **Monday:** Final CVS articles due today (for letter grade)
- **Monday:** Taking class CVS photos today!
- **Monday:** Chapter 12, “Tapping the Web and New Media”
- **Homework for Wednesday, March 30:** Read Chapter 12, “Tapping the Web and New Media”
- Complete one of the four Skill Activities on page 349—this is not for your portfolio unless you want to do No. 3
- **Wednesday:** Guest Speaker- Ryan Nelson, Founder and Owner of Nelwater Consulting, a local PR, marketing and multimedia consulting. Website is at [www.nelwater.com](http://www.nelwater.com)
- **Friday:**
  - Return graded CVS articles
  - Discuss Newsletter Project and posted guidelines
  - Go over Constant Contact newsletter project (guidelines posted)
- **Homework for Monday, April 4:** On your CVS articles, make necessary corrections and turn your article back in Monday with a note indicating that you made the changes (this is a check plus assignment)

**Week 13—April 4**

- Chapter 13, “Producing Newsletters and Brochures”
- **Homework Wednesday, April 4:**
  - Read Chapter 13, “Producing Newsletters and Brochures”
  - Complete Skill Activity 1 on page 384 using three C of C publications. Can be The George Street Observer and two others such as CofC’s admissions recruitment pubs and/or pubs by the Marketing and Communications office (College of Charleston alumni/parents mag and/or Portico employee newsletter—go to that office in Robert Scott Small to get copies)
  - Put on your PR agency letterhead as if you are a consultant hired by the college to conduct a communication audit.
  - This is a portfolio item.
  - Consider evaluating each publication based on four factors given on p. 364: Copy, Layout, Type and Color (from “How to Create Great Publications”)
- **Wednesday:** Chapter 14, “Writing E-mail, Memos, and Proposals”
- **Homework for Friday, April 8:**
  - Read Chapter 14, “Writing E-mail, Memos, etc.”
  - Complete Activity 3 on p. 402. This is a Portfolio item so put on store letterhead. You may want to include a discount coupon to accompany your letter. So design one!
- **Friday:** Constant Contact newsletters
  - Family Circle Cup behind-the-scenes video
- **Homework for Monday, April 11:**
  - Open your own account with Constant Contact ([www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com))
  - Prepare a typed and detailed description of what your Newsletter will be about. See posted guidelines for what this paper should entail
Week 14—April 11

- Monday: Constant Contact production
- Wednesday: Guest Speaker: Kristen McMullen, Marketing and Public Relations Director, Pinewood Preparatory School, Summerville, S.C.
- Friday: Chapter 18, “Planning Programs and Campaigns”

Homework for Monday, April 18
- Read Chapter 18, “Planning Programs and Campaigns”
- Do Skill Building Activity 2 on page 501-2
- Put your eight-part Program Plan on StarGate social network site letterhead. You are this new start-up company’s V.P. for Corporate Communications

- Reminder: Bring your laptops to class to work on your newsletter

Week 15—April 18 (last full week of classes—all classes end Monday, April 25)

- Monday: In class you will be able to work on your Constant Contact newsletter
- Wednesday: Chapter 19, “Measuring Success”
- Newsletter Project updates
- Friday, April 22: Newsletters are due—hard copy and email to class list and others (including me!)

Final Exam Proposal Writing Part: As part of your final exam you are to do Skill Building Activity 4 on page 402 from Chapter 14, “Writing E-mails, Memos, and Proposals” (worth 10 points on test)
- The proposal should be written to the executive board of the College of Charleston’s Student Government Association
- You are the public relations director of a student organization that wants to sponsor a week-long binge drinking awareness program
- Choose a student organization that would organize such an event and have your proposal on the group’s letterhead
- The formal proposal should include an opening few sentences or a paragraph introducing yourself, the program and what you want the SGA to do.
- Then follow with the 10 sections of a program plan listed on page 398
- Be sure to end the proposal by signing your name
- It’s OK if this goes more than one page

Week 16—Monday, April 25- Last Class (Exams begin Wednesday, April 27)
• **Final Portfolios are due today**—submit this in a professional-looking way, have all materials in a binder with a professional cover
• Final Exam Study Guide review

EXAM DATES:
• **11 a.m. Class:** Friday, April 29, noon
• **Noon Class:** Wednesday, May 4, noon
• Final Exam (tentative) covering Chapters 9-14, 18 and 19 (skip 15-17)

**Friday, May 13—Students can view final grades on MyCharleston
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