
STCM 315: Strategic Advertising and Public Relations Writing Fall 2015

Section: S04 CRN: 86827

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Office Hours:	TR Mornings 10-1:00 MW Mornings 11:30-1:00 MW Afternoon 2:30-3:00 (Evansdale SAS: 1021) Before and after class		

Prerequisites: STCM 215 (Introduction to Strategic Communications)

Course Description: *Strategic Advertising and Public Relations Writing* will build upon basic knowledge of audience analysis and media selection from earlier courses to develop higher-level writing skills across multiple media platforms – traditional, digital and social.

The goal for this course is to teach students how to write in a variety of media with clarity, insight and skill. Through in class and homework writing assignments, students will be given practice in developing solid persuasive writing abilities necessary for professionals entering fields commonly associated with public relations and advertising.

The final product for this class will be a portfolio of writing samples appropriate to the student's later job search. Students will be expected to take on their assignments with a professional attitude and a willingness to learn new techniques. Good writing takes practice, hard work and passion.

What You Will Learn – Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- **Summarize** client, audience and media information and format needs.
- **Identify and apply** the importance of truth, accuracy and fairness in the information gathering and distribution processes.
- **Demonstrate** skills in writing and revising deadline-driven copy within client, space and platform requirements.
- **Produce and critically analyze** story ideas and materials intended for diverse audiences and media platforms.
- **Develop a professional portfolio** by creating high-quality documents for print, broadcast online/social media in a variety of strategic disciplines: public relations, advertising, sales and marketing, and business communication.
- **Create and revise** professional written communications, speeches and presentations that clearly and concisely convey messages to internal and external audiences.
- **Develop and maintain** positive client relationships, and **work as a part of a strategic team.**
- **Evaluate self and peer work** based on the application of successful writing guidelines, including punctuation and grammar; Associated Press style guidelines; and concise organization of standard strategic communication messaging.

- **Understand** concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- **Write** correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- **Critically** evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- **Apply** current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

Pep Talk: This class will at intervals be time consuming and difficult. Your first few assignments possibly will receive low grades, which can be discouraging. Realize that if you put forth the effort, your work should improve throughout the semester, and this improvement will be reflected in your grades. Not to worry. You will come out of this course with the skills and knowledge, not to mention an impressive portfolio. *Please, talk to me at any time if you have questions or concerns about the course. My objective for the course is to make it a positive learning experience that will prepare you for a future career in advertising and public relations. Remember, I am here to guide you, not hinder you.*

Required Texts:

Marsh, C., Guth, D.W., and Short, B. P. (2012). *Strategic Writing: Multimedia Writing for Public Relations, Advertising and More*: Boston: Pearson Education. ISBN 9780205031979

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law (2013). Basic Books ISBN 9780465082995

- You can also download the AP Stylebook Mobile application from <https://www.apstylebook.com/?do=product&pid=mobile>

You will also be expected to complete additional readings as assigned. All assigned readings should be completed before the appropriate class sessions for which they are assigned to generate class discussion and to ensure you are prepared to write. If completion of the readings becomes a problem, I reserve the right to administer pop quizzes on the text material.

Additional Supplies:

- **Flash drive**—All work should be saved to a flash drive. Do not save your work to the hard drive! It is wiped clean each Friday, and you do not want to lose your work. Remember to save your work early and often.
- **Three-ring binders**—one for saving your graded work; one for the print copy of your client portfolio to be turned in to me; and one for a print copy of your portfolio for your client.
- Subscribe to the newsletters for AdAge and PR Daily.
- Newspapers, magazines, trade publications, websites and other publications as required by your assignments or your own interests. In particular, you should be a registered user of latimes.com, which is free. See the press releases services described at <http://www.latimes.com/pressreleases>. You should be familiar with <http://www.prnewswire.com>, <http://www.businesswire.com> and other press release services.

Reference Materials: Use of reference materials to double check accuracy is **strongly** encouraged. These materials are available in the classroom, the library and online. Use these resources. They will prevent you from making embarrassing mistakes.

Keeping up with the News: You are expected to keep up with current events and news related to your client by reading your metro-area newspapers and trade publications, listening to the radio, watching the news, following the social media presence of traditional and alternate news sources, etc.

eCampus

I will use the class eCampus site to post important course documents and to communicate with you. Among other things, you will find this syllabus, PowerPoint slides, assignment instructions and supplemental readings. If you happen to lose any class handouts, you should be able to find them here. Please become familiar with the site and check it often. PowerPoint slides will be posted before class and remain on the site, as space permits, until the end of the semester.

Discussion Board feature: I strongly encourage you to use this feature to discuss client issues with your classmates. Here you can talk about any challenges you are facing, things that have worked/have not worked, or other issues that may arise with your client. Your peers are a great resource—use them!

Professionalism & Manners

This class will be much like an actual job. To that end, professionalism is expected as well as good manners.

- **Please be on time.** Class starts promptly at 10 a.m. and you should be ready to participate. All outside assignments are due at the beginning of class; **deductions will result from work turned in after 10 a.m.** Consistent tardiness (5 or more) will result in you being marked absent.
- **No texting, and please turn off your cell phone alerts in the classroom.** If this becomes a problem you will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day, which could mean a zero for the day's assignment. The absence WILL count against your three free absences. The policy with ringing cell phones stands for texting as well.
- **Please be respectful.** Ignore your personal life and focus on our class while in the classroom. Talking, sleeping, texting or being disrespectful in class in any way is not permissible. If disruptions become a problem, you will be asked to leave and will be marked absent for the day.

Note: This is a service-learning class. In addition to developing professional pieces for your portfolio, this opportunity provides you experience working in the nonprofit sector. Do not forget, however, that you are representing the University, our School and, in particular, the strategic communications sequence. **Professionalism is expected.**

Assignments and Deadlines

Strict deadlines are a reality for this profession. To better prepare you for your STCM career, strict deadlines must also be observed in this course.

- Work turned in after the start of class will be penalized 10 pts.
- Assignments turned in after class, but within 24-hours of the due date will be docked 20 pts.
- Late work will not be accepted after the 24-hour period expires, and you will receive a zero (0) for the assignment.
- E-mailed assignments will not be accepted, unless specifically noted.

All assignments in this course are expected to be presented professionally. All work should be typed and double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins all around, unless otherwise noted. Your work should be grammatically correct with no typographical or factual errors, misspellings or handwritten corrections; otherwise, you will lose points.

Attendance & Participation: Regular, on-time class attendance is a student obligation, and each student is responsible for all work, including tests and written work, for all class meetings. Be aware that I distinguish between attendance and participation. In addition to warming a chair each week, I expect everyone to be active participants in the class– ask questions, offer your opinions, and challenge. I think you’ll find it makes learning easier, and even more fun.

Note: In practical terms, more than one-third of your grade is based on in-class assignments, making regular class attendance vital. An unexcused absence will result in a 0 for that day's assignment(s).

Absences: You get 3 “free” absences, BUT MAKE NOTE: A student who misses 4 classes will have his/her grade reduced by 1 letter grade; missing 4 classes will result in a 2-letter grade reduction; 5 or more absences will result in an unsatisfactory grade in the course. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Note: We will regularly have in-class exercises that cannot be made up. Unexcused absences (i.e., those that aren’t university-sanctioned events or Days of Special Concern) will result in a zero (0) for these assignments. If you are absent on a day in which a take-home exercise is assigned, you are responsible for getting this information from one of your classmates or eCampus, and you are expected to turn it in on its due date. If an absence occurs due to a university-sanctioned activity, please provide documentation **in advance** so it will not count against you. You are responsible for getting me this information and/or notifying me of your planned participation in Days of Special Concern within the first two weeks of class.

Grades will be calculated from the following percentages

Final project + Portfolio presentation: 20%

In-Class Assignments: 15%

(e.g., style quizzes and other in-class assignments)

Out-of-class Writing Assignments:

1. Strategic Message Planner – 10%
2. Two Press Releases (one consumer/one nonprofit) - 10%
3. Feature Story – 5%
4. Print Ad/Print Advertorial - 10%
5. Radio/PSA script – 5%
6. Broadcast Storyboard/Visual Storytelling Storyboard 5%
7. Blog Assignment – 5%
8. Infographic Assignment - 5%
9. Social Media Message Strategies – 10%

A+ = 98-100	A = 92-97	A- = 90-91
B+ = 88-89	B = 82-87	B- = 80-81
C+ = 78-79	C = 72-77	C- = 70-71
D+ = 68-69	D = 62-67	D- = 60-61
F = 59 or below		

The actual letter grade typically means:

You will earn an “A” on an assignment if all of the following are met: The work is rigorous, creative, and shows a thorough knowledge of the materials. It is an excellent piece of work written in a clear and concise manner. Few, if any, errors of fact or writing are present. All aspects of the assignment are present and exceptionally completed.

You will earn a “B” on an assignment if any of the following occur: The work has a few errors but shows a good effort at comprehending the material. It contains clear, understandable writing with some care and expression of knowledge. The writing needs more clarity, more development and/or more examples. The work may be missing some of the subtleties of the assignment.

You will earn a “C” on an assignment if any of the following occur: It is an adequate but superficial completion of the assignment. A number of assignment’s components are missing or not completed adequately. The argument is unsubstantiated or examples are missing. Sources are poorly cited, many errors of fact are present, or writing and grammar are inadequate.

You will earn a “D” or less on an assignment if you: 1) fail to follow assignment directions/suggestions, 2) fail to complete at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the assignment, or 3) fail to show an understanding of the materials (indicating you did not complete the readings or you are not applying them).

Academic Integrity

As journalists and communicators, your reputation for honesty and integrity is the basis of your credibility. In this course, you will be held to the highest standard of ethical behavior. If you are caught cheating, or engaging in plagiarism or fabrication, **you could receive an F for the course, or an F for the assignment. You could also receive an Unforgivable F on your academic transcript.**

The Reed College of Media defines fabrication as the invention of any fact, quote or source in a work of journalism. Any student who presents work that knowingly, and without instructor approval, fabricates quotes of sources can be found guilty of cheating.

The University defines plagiarism in terms of proscribed acts. Students are expected to understand that such practices constitute academic dishonesty regardless of motive. Those who deny deceitful intent, claim not to have known that the act constituted plagiarism, or maintain that what they did was inadvertent are nevertheless subject to penalties when plagiarism has been confirmed. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Submitting as one's own work the product of someone else's research, writing, artistic conception, theme, thesis, dissertation, commercially prepared paper, musical piece or other written, visual, oral or electronic/computerized material that has been copied in whole or in part from the work of others, whether such source is published or unpublished.
2. Incorporating in one's submission, without appropriate acknowledgment and attribution, portions of the works of others; that is, failing to use the conventional marks and symbols to acknowledge the use of verbatim and near-verbatim passages of someone else's work or failing to name the source of words, pictures, graphs, etc., other than one's own, that are incorporated into any work submitted as one's own.

Cheating

The University defines cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and projects as including, but not limited to:

1. Obtaining help from another student during examinations.
2. Knowingly giving help to another student during examinations, taking an examination or doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his own.
3. The unauthorized use of notes, books, or other sources of information during examinations.
4. Obtaining without authorization an examination or any part thereof.

Violations of the Academic Integrity and Responsible Conduct Policy will be handled by the instructor, the Student Code Administrator, and the Student Conduct Board, as appropriate pursuant to West Virginia University Board of Governors Policy 31. Please see the WVU Conduct Code at http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct/student_conduct_code

Inclusion, Diversity & Civility

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. As such, we are committed to providing students, faculty, staff and job applicants with a work and educational environment free from all forms of harassment. Therefore, harassment, in any manner or form, is expressly prohibited. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700).

Through its faculty and student work, the Reed College of Media is actively committed to presenting diverse viewpoints to a general audience and to seeking, nurturing and maintaining ties to a base of multicultural sources. In public relations and advertising, the school equates excellence in campaigns to representing and communicating with diverse clients and audiences. In news storytelling, excellence is equated with the ability to produce stories for and about a wide range of communities and audiences.

For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

Days of Special Concern

WVU recognizes the diversity of its students and the needs of those who wish to be absent from class to participate in Days of Special Concern, which are listed on WVU's Web site. Students should notify their instructor by the end of the second week of classes or prior to the first Day of Special Concern, whichever is earlier, regarding such absences. Your professor will make reasonable accommodations for assignments that a student misses as a result of observing a Day of Special Concern, providing the absence/s are discussed with the professor in advance.

New Printing Process

Reed College of Media majors receive a \$35 printing stipend each semester, which comes from their tuition technology fees. This money is allocated to their Student Mountaineer I.D. card and accessed via the School's swipe card printing system. (Non-major students' Mounty Bounty accounts are charged for printing in School labs.) Please be aware that printing is tracked, and that color prints cost more than black and white ones. Once a student's printing stipend is depleted to a zero sum, students' Mounty Bounty accounts will then be assessed for printing payment.

WVU Adverse Weather Statement

In the event of inclement or threatening weather, everyone should use his or her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Safety should be the main concern. If you cannot get to class because of adverse weather conditions, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible. Similarly, if your instructor is unable to reach the class location, I will notify you of any cancellation or change as soon as possible by one hour before class starts, using MIX or

eCampus to prevent you, as much as possible, from embarking on any unnecessary travel. If you cannot get to class because of weather conditions, I will make allowances relative to required attendance policies, as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.

Guidelines for Grading of Assignments

See the next sheet for how assignments will be graded. The following guidelines also apply.

In-class assignments:

- Ample time will be given in class to work on in-class assignments.
- Don't wait until the last moment to print your copy. Give yourself time to proofread. I will alert you when there are about 10 minutes remaining in class. Save, save, save!
- For in-class assignments only, edit on your hard copy. Use the standard proofreading marks given in *The Associated Press Stylebook*. You will be docked 5 points for every correction not using the proper editing marks. I must be able to read your changes! If you have questions about proper marks, please ask me.

Out-of-class assignments:

- Assignments are due at the **beginning** of class time. Late assignments (and, yes, that includes one minute late!) are penalized per the aforementioned. Assignments turned in more than 24 hours late automatically will be assigned a grade of 0.
- Assignments must be typewritten; assignments not typewritten will be docked one letter grade. In the "real world," computer glitches and printing problems happen but are not excused – the same is true in this classroom. Leave yourself plenty of time to cope with these problems and still make your deadline.
- Out-of-class assignments should be **picture perfect** when they are turned in. They may not be edited on hard copy. Obvious corrections, such as pennaed-in material, correction fluid, etc., will be penalized 10 points each.

Rewrites:

- You may rewrite any assignment (in class or out of class) that receives a grade of **70 or lower**. The rewrite is due no later than one week after you received the assignment back, no later than the beginning of the class period. It is your responsibility to meet this deadline. The rewrite grade and the original grade will be **averaged** to determine your final grade for that assignment.
- You must attach the original work with your rewrite. If no original is attached, the rewrite will not be graded.
- Rewrites also will be subject to greater scrutiny. Mistakes I missed the first time around I may catch on the second read. Proofread your rewrites carefully!

Final Portfolio

The Portfolio you turn in at the end of the semester in print and digital format should include:

- An updated **resume and link to the course WordPress digital portfolio.**
- A **Strategic Message Planner** including information on your client/brand's goal, key facts/features of the service/product/organization/initiative you are promoting, target audience, benefits, competitors and message frames. The report will run 3-6 pages.
- **Two Print News Releases**, one for a consumer product and a second for a local nonprofit. The topic of the release will be discussed in class.
- A **Feature Story** on a person, initiative/program or success associated with your client/brand. The assignment should be at least 1,000 words in length.
- A **Print Ad OR Print Advertorial** based on your client/brand.
- A **Radio Script OR PSA** on a topic determined by your client. The script should be :30 seconds.
- A **Broadcast Storyboard OR Visual Storytelling Storyboard** on a topic determined by your client. The script should be a minimum of :30 seconds.
- A **Blog Assignment** based on your client/brand. The assignment should be at least 500 words in length.
- An **Infographic Assignment** using data visualization techniques.
- A **Social Media Message Strategy** based on your client/brand.
- Additionally, working with a client, prepare **one additional piece that strategically meets the needs of the client.** Suggestions for pieces follow, but other ideas are welcome. The selection of this piece must be approved by the instructor.
 - letter to editor or op-ed
 - media advisory
 - newsletter or e-newsletter
 - direct mail piece
 - media kit
 - pitch letter
 - promotional flier or brochure
 - fact/info sheet
 - website design
 - packet of web ads
 - design of out-of-home advertising

Class Schedule

(This is a guide for the semester, subject to change. You will be notified of any modifications.)

Date	Topic	Readings (Readings should be completed by the day in which they are listed)	Assignments	
1	August 17/19	Introduction Outcomes of Persuasive Writing	<u>Reading:</u> Section I - "Strategic Writing," pp. 1 – 39, Read Appendices A-D	In-Class Assignment: AP Style Quiz 1
2	August 24/26	Strategic Communications Planning	<u>Reading:</u> pp.121-132.	In-Class Assignment: AP Style Quiz 2
3	August 31/Sept. 2	Practice in Print Writing: Press Releases, Media Kits, Brief, Pitches	<u>Reading:</u> pp. 41-86	In-Class Assignment: Media List Due 8/31: Strategic Message Planner Due 9/2: Press Release #1
4	Sept. 9	Practice in Print Writing: Feature Writing, Annual Reports	<u>Reading:</u> pp. 87-98	In-Class Assignment: Pitch Letter Due 9/9: Press Release #2
5	Sept. 14/16	Practice in Print Writing: Speeches, Op-eds and Letter to the Editor	<u>Reading:</u> pp. 99-104, see eCampus	Due 9/16: Feature Story
6	Sept. 21/23	Practice in Print Writing: Print Advertising	<u>Reading:</u> pp. 133-138	In-Class Assignment: Fact Sheets
7	Sept. 28/30	Broadcast Advertising	<u>Reading:</u> pp. 139-151; 154-164	Due 9/30: Print Ad/Advertorial
8	Oct. 5/7	Practice in Broadcast Media	<u>Reading:</u> Review last week's readings	Due 10/7: Radio Script/PSA
	Oct. 9	Mid Semester Grades Due		
	Oct. 12/13	Fall Break Recess		
9	Oct. 14	Practice in Digital Writing: E-blasts &	<u>Reading:</u> pp. 174-186	Due 10/14: Broadcast/Visual Storytelling Storyboard

		Mobile Messaging		
	Oct. 23	Last Day to Drop A Class		
10	Oct. 19/21	Intro to Digital Writing & Blogging	<u>Reading:</u> pp. 105-118; 151-153	
11	Oct. 26/28	Practice in Print Writing: Direct Mail, Brochures & Infographics	<u>Reading:</u> pp. 165-173; 187-198	Due 10/28: Blog Assignment
12	Nov. 2/4	Persuasion & Practice in Digital Media: Social Media	<u>Reading:</u> see eCampus	Due 11/4: Infographic Assignment
13	Nov. 9/11	Strategic Writing Business Communication	<u>Reading:</u> 199-234	Due 11/11: Social Media Message Strategies
14	Nov. 16/18	Professional Ethics	<u>Reading:</u> Section I: The Law and Strategic Writing (pp. 34-39) PRSA Code of Ethics AAF Principles and Practices for Advertising Ethics <u>Discuss</u> final presentation	
15	Nov. 30/Dec. 2/7	In-Class Presentations	Portfolios Due (Presentations)	
16	Dec. 14	Monday	Final 3-5 p.m. (Presentations)	