

# Public Relations Writing

PBRL 3421-001

Fall 2021

M/W 12:40 – 2:05 p.m.. MJ 208

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**Office:** 334A Meeman Journalism Building

**Office Hours:** Monday, 4 – 5 p.m.; Tuesday, 1 – 4 p.m.; Wednesday, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.; other hours by appointment

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Catalog Description

Emphasis on communication tactics; plan, write, and produce public relations tools; audience and media selection; print and electronic media.

### Textbooks

The Public Relations Writer's Handbook. Lehmann, W. (2020). New York: Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-8153-6528-0 eBook ISBN: 978-1-3512-6192-0

The Associated Press Stylebook 2020. New York: Basic Books ISBN: 978-0-917360-69-5

^You can also access The AP Stylebook as an online publication or through an app. Get details about these options online at [apstylebook.com](http://apstylebook.com). There are many ways to access AP through online searches as well.

Other readings will be assigned and posted to eCourseware.

### Classroom format

This class will include lecture, discussion, in-class activities, and group assignments. You will write and submit assignments to eCourseware, which will be returned with feedback meant to encourage your improvement over the course of the semester. Access to a computer or mobile electronic device (tablet preferred) with internet access is required to complete many (if not all) of your assignments. There are computer labs available in the department as well as available on campus.

It is important for you to show up prepared and ready to engage with me and your classmates and to ask questions if you don't understand a concept from the readings or class discussion.

### Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis home page: <http://www.memphis.edu>
2. Click on the "MyMemphis" link at the bottom of the left column menu.
3. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.

4. Click on the “eCampus Resources” tab.
5. In the center column of the page, click on the blue UofM eCourseware link
6. Down on that page, in the FALL 2021 course list available to you, click on the link for PBRL 3421-001 to enter your course

## Course intentions

As a writing-focused class, our mission is to use strategic writing to tell our clients’ stories. While considering the big picture (what’s going on in our communities, nation, and world) and combining that with a commitment to targeting and understanding audiences, conducting solid primary and secondary research, and building strong relationships; we will use our strategic storytelling tools to develop news releases, infographics, and other strategic writing tools.

For this fall class, you will have a client and this organization will serve as the inspiration for every assignment (with exceptions to the personal branding work).

Your grade will come from writing and submitting assignments on behalf of your client, AP and current events quizzes, and personal development and networking exercises. These assignments must be submitted per instructions; no credit will be given outside of the proper submission guidelines.

**LinkedIn.** LinkedIn is a frequently used tool for professionals looking for jobs and employers hiring professionals. You should have a digital profile to showcase your skills and your experiences, especially if you are a rising PR or other mass communication pro. As part of our focus on your professional brand development, we will be looking at your LinkedIn profiles. If you don’t have one yet, don’t worry, we’ll be setting it up.

**Quizzes.** There will be both AP (Associated Press) Style quizzes and quizzes on the content throughout the semester. These quizzes will be administered on eCourseware and are intended to be completed outside of normal class time.

## Grading

A+ = 97-100%; A = 93-96%; A- = 90-92%  
B+ = 87-89%; B = 83-86%; B- = 80-82%  
C+ = 77-79%; C = 73-76%; C- = 70-72%  
D+ = 67-69%; D = 60-66%  
F 0-59%

PR writing assignments – 50%  
Personal branding assignments – 10%  
Quizzes – 10%  
Other assignments & classroom activities – 25%  
Class participation – 5%

## Plagiarism policy

*First offense:* Redo for 50%, plus meet with me

*Second offense:* Automatic 0, no redo

*Third offense:* Automatic class fail

*Final assignment, regardless of which offense: Automatic 0 on assignment*

### Citation policy

For this class, we'll use AP Style (<https://www.apstylebook.com>) and APA style ([https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)).

All work in this course should follow AP Style, including proper spelling, grammar and language. A large part of public relations is having a polished written concept of what you are communicating. This includes all class work and presentations. Problems in these or other areas will result in the deduction of points.

I expect your work to be good – and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources, you must use APA formatting. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

### Late work

<24 hours late: -10% (perfect = 90% A)  
24-48 hours late: -20% (perfect = 80% B)  
48-72 hours late: -30% (perfect = 70% C)  
Final call: Up to 50% credit (perfect = 50% F)

### Students with disabilities & accommodations

If you will need accommodations through [Disability Resources](#) to meet any of the requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. Remember, this does not mean you are incapable or receiving special treatment. We all have specific tools we use to do our best work. I encourage you to consider which tools you need to be your best in this class.

### Resources specific to physical health and wellness:

[Mental health Services](#)  
[UofM Student Health Center](#)  
[Sexual, domestic, and intimate partner violence resources](#)

### Financial resources :

There are many resources available through the Dean of Students including:

[Dr. Rosie Phillips Bingham Student Emergency Fund](#)  
[Emergency Food Resources](#), which includes [Tiger Pantry](#)  
[Emergency Housing](#)  
[Specific COVID-19 relief funds](#)

### COVID-19 protocols for this course

### **COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy - Masks and Social Distancing**

Faculty, staff, students and visitors are expected to monitor current health and safety measure requirements posted to our website and shared through other official communication channels including, but not limited to University email. Definitions related to those requirements and enforcement mechanisms appear in the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy \(GE2040\)](#). **Please be reminded that the University currently requires that all persons, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors and in places where appropriate social distancing is not possible.**

Classroom experiences from recent semesters have shown that the campus community generally understands and complies voluntarily with the mask requirement. The policy does permit faculty members to take action for non-compliance of mask use. Additionally, if students have concerns about faculty or staff mask use, contact Human Resources at [hr@memphis.edu](mailto:hr@memphis.edu) or 901.678.3573. Faculty who are delivering on-campus instruction may remove their face mask to teach, provided they are located within a delineated teaching area that is no less than 6 feet from students.

### **Student Health**

Students who are experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing or a higher than normal temperature should inform me by email so they can be excused from class and should stay home. Students should contact their health care provider or the Student Health Center at <https://www.memphis.edu/health/>.

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@memphis.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@memphis.edu) or 901.678.2187.

### **Testing & Notification**

The University will continue to provide testing for the entire campus community. The details regarding test availability and locations can be found [here](#). Do not come to campus if you are experiencing symptoms, are in isolation or quarantine due to positive test results or exposure, pending test results, or have reason to believe you have come in contact with the virus.

### **Student Resources**

Students who need additional resources can contact the Dean of Students Office at <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>.

### **Guidelines for classes, labs and equipment in Meeman Journalism Building in Fall 2021**

- Anyone feeling sick should stay home.
- Social distance from all others at least 6 feet when possible.
- Wear a mask at all times when in University buildings and outside when social distancing isn't possible.

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- No more than one person in the elevator at a time.
- Disinfect your workstation before and after use, including desks, keyboards, mice and screens. Wash your hands after cleaning.
- Air purifiers must run at all times during class meetings.