

Course Description

Public Relations Media (JOUR351A) is a four-unit course that will focus on uncontrolled media. We will delve deeply into the roles of and relationship between the media and public relations, while you build on your understanding of basic public relations concepts and principles.

Through lectures, readings and hands-on practice, you will learn to produce the most important and most common media relations tools according to commonly accepted standards. In addition, you will learn to strategize persuasive efforts and put them into action. Principles of ethics and social responsibility will be woven throughout the course.

The success of the public relations professional has as much to do with writing ability as anything else. The ability to write well, write creatively and capture the audience's attention can be your ticket to a successful career.

***Public Relations is...** a management function that maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its successes or failures depend.*

Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

- To understand the fundamental communication, behavioral and organizational principles that serve as the foundation for the practice of contemporary public relations.
- To develop an understanding of the variety of organizational problems public relations professionals are engaged to solve, the challenges they face and the types of solutions they craft to achieve desired outcomes.
- To understand how to plan, execute and evaluate public relations campaigns.
- To enhance your written and oral presentation skills.
- To understand how to research, design, produce, write and manage public relations media and materials.
- To understand how to plan, execute and evaluate public relations campaigns.
- To understand how to strategize persuasive efforts in creating effective media coverage.
- To understand the roles of and relationships between the media and public relations.

Tasks in the Class

We will write and produce news releases, fact sheets, advisories, pitch letters, features, photos and captions, press kits, etc... We will also look at media events such as press conferences, special events, interviews, photo shoots and more.

All the varied collateral that public relations professional provide to the media will be dealt with in this class. The success of the public relations professional has as much to do with writing ability as anything else. The ability to write well, write creatively and to capture the attention of your audience can be your ticket to an exceptional career.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
In-Class Assignments/Participation	10
Take Home Assignments/Homework	15
Quizzes	15
Mid-term Exam	25
Final Project	35
TOTAL	100%

95 to 100: A	70 to less than 75: C+	45 to less than 50: D-
90 to less than 95: A-	65 to less than 70: C	0 to less than 45: F
85 to less than 90: B+	60 to less than 65: C-	
80 to less than 85: B	55 to less than 60: D+	
75 to less than 80: B-	50 to less than 55: D	

“A” projects have writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material. All required elements included (catchy headline, solid lead, varied vocabulary; supporting facts/figures; quotes as required). Excellent organization and flow; original thinking. Showed creativity in packaging/distribution method. High end of scale: publishable today as is.

“B” projects have two to five spelling, grammar or AP Style mistakes. One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed (i.e., boring headline; confusing lead, etc.). Shows potential as a good writer. Adhered to inverted pyramid. High end of scale will have at least one extraordinary element such as astonishing lead or little-known facts or pithy quote. Some creativity shown. Publishable with medium editing.

“C” projects have more than five errors (spelling, grammar, AP style). Poorly edited and/or proofread. May have adhered to inverted pyramid but strayed at beginning or end. Hackneyed elements such as trite headline or uninteresting lead. Little or no facts/figures included. Passive rather than active verbs become the norm. Little or no creativity shown. Publishable with major editing.

“D” projects have more than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten. Poorly organized with little or no understanding of journalistic style/standards. Needs to work with writing coach.

“F” projects are not rewritable, late or not turned in.

Participation in Class Discussions

It is important to attend class and actively participate, since class activities and interaction with peers encourage creative dialogue and diversity of perspective, which helps enhance your learning. It is expected that students will come to class having read/viewed the materials and be prepared to join class discussions, contributing questions and comments. Classes begin promptly, so please arrive on time. If you are unable to attend class for some reason, please notify the instructor as soon as possible, and assume personal responsibility for gathering notes from other classmates.

At the end of the semester, points will be allocated to students based upon:

- ✓ Consistent demonstration that they have read the material for scheduled class discussion
- ✓ Contribution to class discussion; answering questions, asking relevant questions
- ✓ Consistent attendance in class in order to participate in and contribute to class discussions
- ✓ Demonstrating respect for fellow classmates, guest speakers, and instructor (including appropriate use of personal technologies during classroom time)
- ✓ Mature classroom behavior that supports learning

Participation in Class Discussion Grading			
CRITERION	EXEMPLARY 13-15 pts	SATISFACTORY 9-12 pts	UNACCEPTABLE 0-8 pts
Frequency	Frequent contribution to class discussion.	Regular contribution to class discussion	Seldom or no contribution to class discussion
Relevance	Contributions to class directly address key issues, questions, or problems related to the text and the discussion activity.	Contributions to class address key issues, questions, or problems related to the text and the discussion activity, but in some cases only.	Contributions to class do not directly address the question or problem posed by the discussion activities.
Insight	Contributions to class offer original or thoughtful insights, analyses, or observations that demonstrate a strong grasp of concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topics.	Contributions to class offer some insight, analysis, or observation to the topic but may not demonstrate a full understanding or knowledge of concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topics.	Contributions to class do not offer any significant insight, analysis, or observation related to the topic. No knowledge or understanding is demonstrated regarding concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topics.
Support	Contributions to class support all claims and opinions with either rational argument or evidence.	Contributions to class generally support claims and opinions with evidence or argument, but may leave some gaps where unsupported opinions still appear.	Contributions to class do not support their claims with either evidence or argument. The contributions contain largely unsupported opinion.

Assignment Submission Policy

Deadlines are the norm in mass media and public relations work, therefore, deadlines will be firm and strictly enforced. Assignments will be collected at the start of class in printed form ONLY, unless indicated by me. NO EXCEPTIONS! In case an emergency prevents you from attending class, please e-mail homework to me on or before the deadline.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- * *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*, by Associated Press
- * "Woe is I," by Patricia O'Connor
- * "The Elements of Style," by Strunk and White
- * Recommended Readings

Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

Policies and Procedures

Class Attendance

Students are advised to attend the first class meeting of their journalism classes or the instructors may drop them from their classes. The School of Journalism adheres to the university policy, which states "an instructor may replace any student who, without prior consent, does not attend... the first class session of the semester for once-a-week classes. It is then the student's responsibility to withdraw officially from the course through the Registration Department."

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/b/11-00-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional

information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

"Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an 'F' on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators." In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

b. Support Systems

Equity and Diversity

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://dps.usc.edu/contact/report/>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community - such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member - can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person.

The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <https://sarc.usc.edu/> describes reporting options and other resources.

Support with Scholarly Writing

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

Students requesting test-related accommodations will need to share and discuss their DSP recommended accommodation letter/s with their faculty and/or appropriate departmental contact person at least three weeks before the date the accommodations will be needed. Additional time may be needed for final exams. Reasonable exceptions will be considered during the first three weeks of the semester as well as for temporary injuries and for students recently diagnosed. Please note that a reasonable period of time is still required for DSP to review documentation and to make a determination whether a requested accommodation will be appropriate.

Stress Management

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

Emergency Information

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change – and probably will change – based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 Jan 11	Student/Instructor introductions Course and Syllabus Review What is Public Relations? Writing for Public Relations	Student Biography Study Class Notes * This assignment will NOT be graded	January 19 (via email by 6PM)
Week 2 Jan 18	No Class Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		
Week 3 Jan 25	Slander and libel What makes news? Persuasive Speaking, Media Communication Theories Entertainment Public Relations Sports/Travel Public Relations Public Relations Arenas	The Hometown Brochure Writing Assignment	February 1
Week 4 Feb 1	Media Advisory News Release Types of News Releases Press Releases Media Placement	Media Advisory & News Releases	February 8

Week 5 Feb 8	“Making the release searchable” Social Media News Releases Search Engine Optimization Public Relations Agencies Public Relations Services More on News Releases More on Media Advisories	“SEOing” Media Advisory & News Releases	February 16 (via email by 6PM)
Week 6 Feb 15	No Class Presidents’ Day		
Week 7 Feb 22	“Word Press & Social Newsrooms” What makes news “On the Record – Off the Record” Blogs	Blog # 1	March 2
Week 8 Feb 29	Review for Midterm	Study	
Week 9 Mar 7	Midterm	Blog # 2	March 21
Week 10 Mar 14	No Class Spring Break		
Week 11 Mar 21	Crisis Communication Online Newsrooms Working with media Statements Fact Sheets	Fact Sheet	March 28

Week 12 Mar 28	Government Relations Corporate Public Affairs Pitch Letters Social Media Pitch	"The Pitch"	April 4
Week 13 Apr 4	Social Media Executive Bio	Executive Bio/Social Media Site	April 11
Week 14 Apr 11	Public Relations campaigns Product Placement Visual Techniques in the mass med Corporate Public Relations Marketing Communications Cause-related Marketing Public Relations Advertising Speechwriting	Speech & SEO News Release	April 18
Week 15 Apr 18	Newspaper Public Relations Magazine Public Relations Tabloid Public Relations	Spin Doctor	April 18
Week 16 Apr 25	Pitch & Present Final Project Speech and Social Media Site	Final Project	April 25

Professor Biography:

Darryl Ryan is the Vice President of Corporate Communications for Wells Fargo & Company. In this role, Ryan develops, manages and executes external and internal communications plans and strategies that protect and enhance the company's reputation. He serves as a strategic communications advisor to region presidents and senior executives, and he leads company-wide communications strategies and media plans to support major corporate initiatives.

Prior to joining Wells Fargo, Ryan served in senior-level positions with Edison International/Southern California Edison as Senior Corporate Communications Manager and at Time Warner Cable as Media Relations Director. In these roles, Ryan directed and managed all aspects of communication policy, media relations and public relations strategies, and he served as the spokesperson for all media. Additionally, he managed each company's crisis communications plan, provided high-level strategic PR counsel on issues and programs to key executives, spearheaded new social media platforms and oversaw the work of several outside agencies.

Ryan also served as the press secretary and speechwriter for Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. During his tenure in the Villaraigosa administration, Ryan worked as the communication manager and advisor to the mayor on issues ranging from transportation, public safety, and economic development, to entertainment, sports business and public works. While serving in this role, Ryan strategically managed the development and implementation of media and communication strategies and communicated the mayor's policies and stances to television, radio and print reporters.

Ryan holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Public Policy from UCLA, a Master of Science degree in Public Relations from Boston University, and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Michigan, Ross School of Business.