

# USC Annenberg



## PR 351A: Strategic Public Relations Media and Content 4 Units

**Spring 2019 – Thursdays – 2-5:20 p.m.**

**Section:** 21148D

**Location:** ANN 413

**Instructor:** Cindy Dole

**Office:** ANN classroom or lobby

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 1 p.m. Please request an appointment

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### I. Course Description

Today's public relations professional needs to understand and be competent in many forms of communication. The business world they work in is rapidly evolving with earned, owned and paid media converging. Media relations, social media content creation and influencer engagement, and paid media are now equally important for any organization's strategic communications. The role of the public relations practitioner has changed to reflect this shift and training needs to include intensive writing plus creating high-quality multimedia content for traditional, emerging and social media.

This class is an intensive, hands-on course designed to provide students with the skills necessary to engage with, and produce compelling content for, contemporary media channels of all types.

What defines the media: Who are they? What do they do? How do they get their stories? What tools are needed in today's media environment? How do we best engage, connect and tell our clients' stories and brand message to a multitude of media outlets, using a wide variety of strategic multimedia tactics and methods.

In this course, we will hone your skills as a writer and storyteller to include multimedia components and tools of the craft to entice and engage in today's world. This will include using photos we will take with a cell phone, royalty free photos from websites, and video we shoot using our cell phones and later edit in iMovie to create B-roll and interview segments. We will also incorporate infographics using programs like Photoshop, canva or picmonkey to include in our media collateral. Eventually you will create your own online newsroom and website for your chosen client with a platform on WordPress.

### II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

This class will provide competency writing and producing a wide variety of content using tools used to engage traditional and emerging media. We will examine the rapidly changing fields of digital media and their roles in the relationship between public relations and the modern media.

In this class, the emphasis will be on writing and **actual** content production such as short interview videos and photos that tell a story and enhance your overall communications strategy.

**Comment [BT1]:** What does that mean?  
Audiovisual? Multimedia?

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, to capture the attention of your audience is essential for an exceptional career. Writing skills are the essence of being an excellent content creator.

**Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:**

- 1- Identify an array of traditional and emerging print, broadcast and online media outlets and understand their inner workings.
- 2- Craft and pitch a story to any of the aforementioned media, with a keen understanding of what constitutes “news” for every type of audience.
- 3- Write materials and create content for both media outlets and general audiences.
- 4- Prepare a detailed media relations plan that reflects an understanding of the role of integrated strategy and effective targeting of the audience, message and outlet.

**Assessment Tools to Verify Students Have Successfully Completed The Learning Objectives:**

**Objective #1 - Identify an array of traditional and emerging print, broadcast and online media outlets and understand their inner workings.**

**Assessment Tools Objective #1:**

- Course discussions where students contribute and are able to communicate and express their understanding of traditional and emerging media. The following assignments will be used to assess this goal:
- In class participation review and analysis of strategic media channels used by public relations: traditional, emerging digital, social and owned. Students will identify what is news to these different outlets and different niches. What do they need and want? How to deliver content the media will use and appreciate?
- Students will evaluate in class and in homework the wide variety of content that needs to be created by the PR professional today to connect with a long list of strategic media channels (i.e. news release vs. feature vs. web video vs. social media) and demonstrate ways to best communicate and form strong relationships with the media.
- In class projects and homework assignments identifying and analyzing news stories that were picked up and run today by the media because of a PR pitch.
- In class discussions where students identify specific audiences for each media channel and then plan in class and in homework the best practices to connect with your target audience(s) for a client/brand.
- Develop strategic messages in a variety of content that students develop in class and in homework to not only connect with your target audience, but the media across different strategic channels.
- Discuss stories in the news and demonstrate how to develop a different audience, media target and messaging structure for the story.
- Review, discuss and demonstrate other PR tools to meet the media’s needs. While the news release is an important component in your media relations toolbox, equally important are the ancillary materials that reporters use.

- Discuss, compare and demonstrate in class and in homework other ways the PR professional may be a valued resource to the media by offering a variety of content to meet the media's needs as well as their audience: Feature stories, backgrounders, and bios – other ways to hook the media.
- Analyze and discuss media events: press conferences, parties, press events.
- Class discussion and participation on how and when to use media events, when to avoid them and how to throw them. What works and, almost as importantly, what doesn't.
- Demonstrate in class how to give the media specific materials that meet their needs as well as their audience: i.e. photos for print vs. video television, versus writing for blog, vs social media. Students will be able to share their understanding of the relationship between the public relations professional and the media.
- In class discussions of real world news and media environment with student participation on how and when to talk to the media, which media to target and how to get your story delivered.
- Discuss how to prepare for an interview with the media and be a spokesperson with in class practice on camera. How to develop key messages. How to weave main points into responses. How to deal with the tough questions.
- Demonstrate and review how to be a spokesperson and how to represent a brand to the media. Students will discuss, practice and show they know what to say, be memorable and on point while connecting with the audience.

**Objective #2 – Craft and pitch a story to any of the aforementioned media with a keen understanding of what constitutes “news” for every type of audience.**

**Assessment Tools Objective #2:**

- Students will be evaluated throughout the course based on writing assignments and multimedia content development considered news for a variety of media outlets with photos, videos, and graphics they develop and or incorporate into their work leading up to the final, a website and online newsroom that demonstrates all of the skills they have learned.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of which methods of writing and content production work best based on the client/brand's needs, their desired audience, and the types of media the target demographic consumes.
- In class discussions and hands-on workshop writing and content production within the moment feedback and reviews while developing these important PR tools:  
*News Releases, Fact Sheets, Advisories, Features, Blogs, Opinion/Op-Ed Pieces, Backgrounders, Bio/Biographies, Shoot and Edit Web Video Interviews, Shoot and Edit Web Video B-Roll, Shoot and Edit Photos, Edit Logo and Infographics.*
- News release writing evaluates the student's ability to understand what makes news in the eyes of a journalist, how to grab their attention in a saturated world of media and content, what elements that particular journalist may need for their media outlet (i.e. interview opportunities, photos, ) and most importantly answers the question, why do I care? The news release must answer the 5 w's and an h, with a strong headline, lead paragraph, using interesting and creative writing to entice while using best writing, grammar and AP style - News releases – 100 points
- Fact sheet writing recognizes the ability to organize facts in a meaningful way that is not only powerful for a client but easy for the media to consume and digest quickly. This is another method of evaluating knowledge and the ability to interpret and prioritize important information that will get the media excited at a quick glance. Not only must the brand be showcased accurately and well

but it should get the media interested to know more and give them ideas for stories with graphics, nuggets, and statistics. This is another tool for assessing the student's ability to integrate information while still following excellent writing and journalism decisions like the news release.  
Fact Sheets – 100 points

- The advisory identifies the understanding of how to quickly get the media to save the date and mark a client's event, announcement or news conference on their calendar, in spite of the email clutter. By using best journalism practices and creating urgency with a smart headline, lead paragraph and giving the media opportunities should they attend, i.e. interviews, visuals, the advisory is another assessment that identifies a student's judgement, and ability to quickly grab the media's attention. Advisories – 100 points
- More than where a person was born, writing a compelling summary of what is interesting and unique about a person makes the bio another assessment tool that shows how the student can distinguish facts and illustrate what is unique to a person's own story. Like a news release and a lead that summarizes the most important part up front, the bio should begin with what that person's "news" is or summary of what they are known for/achieved. This assignment evaluates a student's ability to analyze and evaluate what is most important in a person's bio. Bio- 100 points
- The Backgrounder assignment assesses a student's ability to identify, interpret and illustrate the history of an issue, event, or brand. It also demonstrates and distinguishes detailed knowledge of what a brand finds important to their mission and wants to share, as well as what the media may find interesting and newsworthy. Backgrounders – 100 points
- Student discussion and participation evaluating real news examples of how and when to talk to the media; which media to target; how to get your story delivered.
- The relationship between the public relations and the media. Tools for working with the media.
- Discuss and write in class ways to talk to the media; when to talk to the media; what media to target; how to get your story delivered. Making sure your pitch isn't the tree that falls in the forest when no one is in the forest.
- Discuss and demonstrate different effective ways to connect with and pitch the media.
- The email pitch. Knowing how to talk to the media in an email is crucial and this assignment recognizes and illustrates a student's ability to connect, communicate and pitch quickly to a reporter/member of the media. This assignment evaluates whether that email in the subject line and body of the message quickly grab your attention, while introducing a newsworthy, interesting, viable and relevant topic as well as why someone should truly care about the pitch or content being proposed. Email pitch- 100 points
- The voicemail pitch. This is similar to the email pitch but the voicemail pitch measures not only the words chosen to create excitement quickly in the mind of the media, but through voice shows enthusiasm, confidence and warmth in an effort to create a friendly relationship with the media, being sensitive to their time, while demonstrating how this content being pitch is of value to them. Voicemail pitch – 100 points.
- Presentations and Spokesperson training – Students will learn and demonstrate how to present and be a spokesperson on behalf of their client. They will review and discuss effective ways to communicate, what to say, how to say it and remain calm, confident and connect with the audience. Students will demonstrate on camera and public speaking methods known as WISE = Warmth, Intelligence, Sincerity and Enthusiasm. Students giving a presentation in class and acting as a brand spokesperson on camera prepares them for the real world, while assessing their ability to discuss, communicate and position you up as a resource for the media with potential future interviews. Presentations and spokesperson assignments demonstrate and distinguish a student has learned

and can apply these important communication skills to represent a client and build relationships with the media. – 100 points

**Objective #3 - Write materials and create content for both media outlets and general audiences.**

**Assessment Tools Objective #3:**

- Students will achieve the ability to master and demonstrate a wide variety of writing and multimedia content production that not only appeals to the media/reporter, and their outlet but the general public.
- Blogs are a great way to connect with a target audience in an authentic way. Students will demonstrate new ways to create content that is different from a news release but instead shares an opinion with creative writing. This type of writing in class and in homework assignments will assess the student's ability to apply great journalism writing but also share a point of view with creativity with some kind of payoff if you read to the end, i.e. you learn something. Blogs – 100 points
- Feature writing is another type of writing students will tackle to demonstrate and assess their ability to create content that is so good it may be published as is, or will get the media to want to cover the story. This news story type of writing is another assignment that gauges great writing, creative thought, and the ability to find new angles that may be trending and would be picked up by the media. Unlike the news release, the feature hardly mentions the brand at all and perhaps just a website link at the bottom. Feature – 100 points
- Students will showcase their argumentative writing abilities with the powerful tool of the Opinion Editorial or Op Ed piece. This assesses a student's knowledge, critical thinking, and ability to be bold and write about it with a timely news hook that could catch the media's attention. This assessment shows the student can make a strong point right away grounded in research, leading up to a strong conclusion to advance the argument. Op Ed – 100 points
- Students will learn and be able to demonstrate short video production, both shooting and editing using a cell phone and a video editing program like iMovie. The ability to engage an audience with a story that is visually interesting is essential for today's media as well as the PR professional. Students will be assessed during in-class video production and editing as well as through completed projects shared with the class for discussion. The video component of our projects will evaluate a student's ability to make "movie magic" using a cell phone and then edit visuals and interviews into short videos. Demonstrating creativity and an eye for the power of how video sells a story will determine a student has learned the techniques of basic camera control, smooth edits with interviews and b-roll or cut away footage.
- Throughout the semester social media awareness and understanding will also be part of the assessment to amplify and aggregate all content we create using multiple media platforms. Students will demonstrate knowledge of social media icons, channels and messaging that may apply for a paper, or piece of content. Students will discuss and share their strategies and why it may be effective for a campaign.

**Objective #4 - Prepare a detailed media relations plan that reflects an understanding of the role of integrated strategy and effective targeting of the audience, message and outlet.**

**Assessment Tools for Objective #4:**

- Students will discuss in class a variety of integrated strategies to target a certain audience and explain the best methods to reach those people depending on the client. In class and in

homework students will demonstrate knowledge of how best to creatively connect with a certain audience by sharing in class participation and brainstorming sessions. They will also show strategic thinking in assignments by choosing the best media and audience targets for a particular piece of work or brand assigned or chosen.

- Students will also demonstrate through discussion, class participation and homework various PR messaging structures for a wide variety of brands, niches and needs that will connect with a target audience across different strategic channels.
- The final project, an **online newsroom** and website for a real life brand of their choice, with multiple types of content developed by the student evaluates all they have learned throughout the course. The student will demonstrate a deep understanding of how to use all of the media tools learned throughout the class with a variety of papers, photos, graphics, videos and multimedia content that are now an effective tool to communicate to the media and multiple audiences.

\*The point system for grading in each of these assignments is provided to students in advance of the projects and is available on blackboard. Students will also receive multiple handouts with checklists for success in each assignment.

### III. Description of Assignments

- In-class assignments
- Take-home writing/multimedia assignments
- Midterm Examination
- Final project: Online newsroom
- Participation
- Reading

### IV. Grading

#### a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Writing assignments	25%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Project	35%
Homework	15%
Participation	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D

87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

### b. Grading Standards – Public Relations

**“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.

### V. Assignment Submission Policy

- a. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.
- b. Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard.

### VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- a. You must bring your laptop to every class. I advise you to bring a charger as well. If you cannot complete the in-class assignments, you will receive no credit.
- b. *“The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.”* Associated Press, 2016, 2014
- c. Dictionaries and other writing references are indispensable. You need to have easy access to one or more guides to spelling, grammar, punctuation and writing style. *“Woe is I”* by Patricia O’Connor and *“The Elements of Style”* by Strunk and White are among the best of the shorter volumes.

Please bring these to class each week, as you will need them for in-class writing exercises. As needed, additional reading assignments will be given during the semester.

Make a news outlet your opening Web page. Be familiar with a wide array of news media and be up on current events.

## **VII. 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.

## **VIII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/7/19 – 4/26/19)**

**Friday, January 25:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, January 25:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

**Tuesday, January 29:** last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, February 22:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the week three equivalent for short sessions) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, April 5:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

## **IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

### **Jan. 10 /WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION. A LOOK AT MEDIA CHANNELS and PACKAGING OF MATERIALS**

- Housekeeping: Presentation of syllabus. Going over class requirements and outlining of what to expect over the semester.
- Down to business: Beginning to define the media and what do they need or want with the public relations professional.
- Summary of strategic media channels used by public relations – traditional, emerging digital, social and owned.
- Discuss the need to create content for all of these channels through a strategic communication process.
- ***In class:***
  - Review news releases.
  - Write a news release.

#### **Homework:**

- Finish news release. Bring a news story you think was run as a result of a PR pitch. Type a brief (one to two paragraphs) explanation. You can attach the article or include a link.

### **Jan. 17/WEEK 2: MEDIA COLLATERAL – THE NEWS RELEASE AND BEYOND**

- Review in-class news releases from last week. Discussion of the fundamentals of good writing and how to fine-tune your press release; paying attention to details.



- Review homework of news releases turned into stories picked up, why, and the perceived target audience.
  - Identify key messages aimed at audience
  - Discuss why the story was carried by specific outlets
- Packaging of materials: First the news release and then what? Fact sheets and Advisories.

***In class:***

- Write a fact sheet.

**Homework:**

- Create a list of materials beyond the release, fact sheet and advisory you would create in order to enhance your news release story.
- Write an advisory.

**Jan. 24/WEEK 3: ADVANCED MESSAGING AND AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION**

- Review advisory homework.
- Development of target audiences, creation of messages to connect with specific audiences and the choice of outlets to reach each audience segment. How to connect with your target audience(s) across different strategic channels.
- Discuss stories in the news and how to develop a different audience and messaging structure for the story.
- Discuss details of the final project – the Online Newsroom – and start thinking about your brand, company, cause, or product. This must be an existing company/brand.

***In class:***

- Look at online newsrooms and the bios they publish. Different types for different brand personalities.
- Write a bio about a 2018 Grammy Award nominee of your choice. (**Note don't follow the IMDB website format**)

**Homework:**

- Write your own personal bio. Bring a professional personal photo to use on your bio page for your online newsroom.

**Jan. 31/WEEK 4: MULTIMEDIA CONTENT AS A PR TOOL**

- The news release has evolved from the traditional written media relations tool to a complex multi-media advocacy tool to promote an individual, company, non-profit or government's position.

***In class:***

- Review online newsrooms. What are they and what sets them apart?
- Set up your own website. Create your WordPress account for your site.
- Create bio page.

**Homework:**

- Post your news release to your website. Include multimedia (Photo/logo/what is relevant/links?).
- Post a fact sheet with another tab.
- Write a backgrounder.

#### **Feb. 7/WEEK 5: ONLINE NEWS ROOMS**

- What makes an effective online newsroom? What all is included? Who uses them and why?
- How can it impact a brand and their connection with the audience?
- Discuss – show and compare.
- How to create a digital press kit. What about brand personality, color? What's trending?
- How to create compelling posts and pages, inserting multimedia, using links, theme design, creating menus and sub-menus.

#### ***In class:***

- Create a separate page for fact sheet and include multimedia. Convert fact sheet, to digital with photos and graphics.

#### **Feb. 14/WEEK 6: ONLINE STORYTELLING**

- We'll examine a myriad of ways to enhance your story: blogs, features, op-eds. What are the differences? What are they used for, and when to use them?
- Creating materials for a variety of platforms: print, web, social media, TV and Radio

#### ***In Class:***

- Review a Features worksheet.
- Write a feature.

**Homework:** Finish your feature. Bring to class next week.

#### **Feb. 21/WEEK 7: DEVELOPMENT OF A MEDIA/INFORMATION KIT – HOW DO WE DELIVER INFORMATION FOR MEDIA TO REPORT?**

- While the news release is an important component in your media relations toolbox, equally important are the ancillary materials that reporters use. To be viewed as a valued resource, you must also know how to prepare other materials to tell your story: Feature stories, backgrounders, and bios – other ways to hook the media.

#### ***In class:*** Op-Ed

**Homework:** Midterm next week. Bring laptops and chargers.

#### **Feb. 28/WEEK 8: MIDTERM**

- In-class writing exam for the entire class period: Writing of elements covered in class to date.

**Homework:**

- Bring to class a photo that ran in an online news site, newspaper or magazine that you think was PR provided. Type up a brief explanation of why you did or did not like it or think it was effective.
- Bring to class your smartphone and a connector for the class computer.

**Mar. 7/WEEK 9: STORYTELLING WITH VISUALS**

- In class review of monumental photographs that impacted history and examine the content, message and placement of those photos.
- The art of media image storytelling, writing compelling titles and photo captions.

***In class:***

- Review of photos from homework
- Take an effective photo, edit it, and write a caption
- Create and post to a blog.

**Homework:**

- Watch online video tutorial *iMovie'16 and '09 Essential Training* on Lynda.com.

**Mar. 14/SPRING BREAK: \*\*\*\*No Class – Spring Recess)**

**Mar. 21/WEEK 10: CREATION OF B-ROLL VIDEO**

- A summary of video production techniques using modern HD video cameras including mobile phones, SLRs, etc.
- An overview of editing techniques for non-professional editing programs such as iMovie.
- What makes effective video?

***In class:***

- Creation of b-roll

**Homework:**

- Polish b-roll and post to your website.

**Mar. 28/WEEK 11: ADVANCED VIDEO**

- Beyond b-roll: interviews.

***In class:*** Interview a classmate and gather b-roll.

**Homework:** Create a video package of classmate interview.

**April 4/WEEK 12: PITCHING THE MEDIA/ INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES**

- How and when to talk to the media; what media to target; how to get your story delivered.
- How to prepare for an interview.
- How to develop key messages. How to weave main points into responses. How to deal with the tough questions.

***In Class:*** Write an email pitch.

**Homework:**

- Leave a voicemail pitch to my cell phone (818) 458 - 7099.

#### **April 11/WEEK 13: MEDIA EVENTS AND PRESENTATION SKILLS**

- Media Events: press conferences, parties, press events. When to use them, when to avoid them and how to throw them.
- What works and, almost as importantly, what doesn't. Giving the media materials flexibility to meet the needs of different audiences.
- The relationship between the public relations and the media. Tools for working with the media.
- Making sure your pitch isn't the tree that falls in the forest when no one is in the forest.

***In class:*** Presentation training. We'll practice and review how to be a spokesperson on camera and other channels, and how to represent a brand to the media. What to say and do to be memorable and on point while connecting with the audience.

#### **April 18/WEEK 14: INTEGRATING MEDIA COMPONENTS INTO A ROBUST CROSS-PLATFORM CAMPAIGN**

- You've developed all your media materials and had your media event, now let's amplify, aggregate and curate across our social and owned media channels. How to craft your content across multiple platforms including social media.
- Review the final – Questions?

**Homework:** Work on final project.

#### **April 25/WEEK 15: FINAL PRESENTATIONS**

You are expected to present your project premise at this session. The project is not meant to be a final version. You will give an overview of your subject and the strategy behind your content creation.

#### **May 2, 2-4 p.m./FINAL EXAM PERIOD: FINAL PROJECTS DUE at 2 p.m.**

Summative course experience.

### **X. Policies and Procedures**

#### **Additional Policies**

#### ***WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU:***

1. Class starts at on time. You don't have to ask me for permission to miss a class, leave early or come late, or provide a written excuse. I leave those decisions to you. You receive no credit for in-class work that day.
2. Assignments are due to me at the time I designate. All assignments will be complete and typed, with no handwritten edits. Assignments completed not following directions will be graded lower. If you are absent, you are responsible for getting me your homework by the due date/time. **No late assignments are accepted.**

3. There will be no make-ups for the midterm. There will be no extensions for the final project. You must complete the Midterm and final project to pass the class.
4. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a fellow student.
5. Class participation is expected and will help your final grade. Everyone is expected to contribute. Lack of participation will reduce your participation grade.
6. No texting or any use of cell phones or other forms of electronic communication during class. Doing so will have a negative impact on your grade. Computers for class work ONLY.
7. There should only be one discussion going on at a time in class. Paying attention to the speaker, whether it is the instructor, fellow student or guest is a sign of respect and professionalism. Disruptive behavior, such as talking out of turn and carrying on side conversations, will negatively impact your grade.
8. **The syllabus is our guideline and will change during the course of the semester to accommodate current events and speaker schedules.**
9. You are expected to check Blackboard every week for updates on homework and assignments. I will post the week's homework within 24 hours of our last class. You are also responsible for checking your USC email account, which is how I will communicate with you.

#### ***WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME:***

1. I am open to your questions and welcome the opportunity to discuss any issues concerning you. Please don't hesitate to talk to me.
2. I am fair. When you get a paper back from me, you'll have a good idea why you earned the grade you did and what can be done to improve your writing. However, if things are not clear, let's talk. The more discussion, the better the understanding.
3. This syllabus is a general guideline for what we will cover during the semester. Other assignments, such as written homework and class projects will be assigned. In addition, we will have in-class writing, content development and creative thinking discussion projects most weeks.
4. I'll guide you along to improve your writing, but feel free to help guide our discussions. Bring to class your questions, observations and opinions about how you see the role of public relations at work in the real world. Our most pertinent and interesting class time will come from what's happening in our world today.
5. I am available for questions and conversations before and after class and by appointment. Ready access is through email. I will respond to all messages within 24 hours.

#### **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

#### *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://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>). 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**

### *Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

### *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

### *Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

### *Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

### *Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)

### *Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

### *The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

### *Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

### *Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

### *USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.* Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

## **XI. About Your Instructor**

Cindy Dole is a multimedia content producer and storytelling consultant, specializing in strategic audience planning, video production, web writing, communications and media training.

Cindy brings valuable real world experience in news, PR, marketing, advertising and content production to the classroom with a 30 year career on air as a news anchor, reporter and broadcast journalist on TV and Radio. She also hosted and produced her own nationally syndicated home improvement talk show, Home Wizards, where she worked with agencies and brands as an influencer and brand spokesperson for major Fortune 500 companies on TV, radio and video. Cindy helps students think like a reporter and the media, while also wearing their PR professional hat to form an emotional connection with the audience across multiple platforms of content.

As a journalist, Cindy has won several awards from the Associated Press and many Golden Mike Awards for excellence in live news broadcasting, investigative reporting and covering news events as a news anchor and reporter. Cindy graduated from USC with honors and BA degrees in Broadcast Journalism and Communication.