

PR 351B: Strategic Public Relations Media and Content 4 Units

Spring 2020 – Thursdays – 9 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

Section: 21156D

Location: ANN 308

Instructor: Jenn de la Fuente

Office: ASC G36 (East Wing, basement level)

Office Hours: By appointment only. Make an appointment at <https://calendly.com/jrosebud>

Contact Info: jdelafue@usc.edu, cell (916) 538-2133

(Please do not call or text my cell phone on weekends or late at night.)

I. Course Description

In this class, we will examine “owned media,” those items over which the PR practitioner has control of the final product, the message and the distribution. This course is designed to teach students about the array of public relations tools available to them, with particular emphasis on writing, public speaking and production of communications “collateral.” Students will be exposed to feature writing, brochure development, audience segmentation, newsletter preparation, basic principles of publication design, writing for the ear, making oral presentations, proofreading and brainstorming. Case histories will illuminate the use of these tools and examples of materials will be used extensively throughout the course. This is a lab course; a great deal of hands-on activities such as writing, graphic design and video production will be assigned.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

This course is intended to help students:

- Research, write, and edit professional-quality newsletters, web materials, and video;
- Execute basic design and layout and know when to hire and guide professional designers;
- Organize and manage large-scale deadline-driven projects; and
- Identify and communicate with an array of audiences.

Mastery of course content will be assessed through a variety of activities, including class discussion and interactive/experiential exercises; interaction with guest lecturers; supplemental learning through readings/multimedia presentations beyond the texts; and, most importantly, written/video/web assignments.

III. Course Notes

Do note that there are many in-class assignments and work done while in class. These assignments count toward your class participation grade. **YOU MUST BE IN CLASS AND TURN IN THE ASSIGNMENT IN CLASS TO RECEIVE CREDIT. NO CREDIT OR MAKEUPS WILL BE GIVEN IF YOU ARE ABSENT FROM CLASS.**

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

This course is divided into three components: advanced writing, basic graphic design/layout, and video production. Unlike 351A, the work you will be doing in 351B isn’t focused on media relations or “earned” media; rather, it is focused on “controlled” media—those materials over which we have control of the final production and distribution. These range from traditional company publications—whether printed or online—to websites, Facebook pages, marketing materials, and, of course, videos.

You will be learning Adobe InDesign, the industry standard for desktop publishing, and will need to ensure that you are registered with the Adobe Creative Cloud well in advance of the scheduled design tutorial. You will also learn basic HTML/CSS coding in this class and will be given a link to download a free code editor before these coding

sessions.

The video component of this course will be shot on your smartphone or whatever video equipment you have, and will be edited using your laptop, your phone, or computers in the Media Center.

Case study presentations

Students are encouraged to read the weekly trade publications AdWeek and PRWeek, or spend time observing PR campaigns in whatever field they are interested in. Each student will be required to present an analysis and critique of brand storytelling campaigns either from those publications, or based on a current campaign of your choosing. The presentations will be done by two students each week starting on week 3. The presentation should be at least 5 minutes long and include:

- Summary of the campaign
- Thoughts on the strategy and target audiences
- Campaign messaging/storytelling
- Discussion of all campaign elements including breaking down the production
- Overall critique and suggested changes

Final Project: Newsletter/e-Bulletin/Infographics

For your final project, you may choose to produce either a newsletter, an e-bulletin, or TWO infographics. You may elect to prepare your piece in electronic rather than printed format or submit both. The purpose of the project is for you to have the experience of producing bona fide public relations materials that can be powerful additions to your online job portfolios! Regardless of which item you select, you will be expected to:

- Identify a company or an organization to be the subject of your project;
- Research and write all copy;
- Design and produce a mock copy of your chosen project;
- Include at least one *original* graphic (photo, table, graph, chart); and
- Present your project to the class.

You will be producing a publication from scratch. This means you will select a topic and a theme; gather information about the chosen organization or company; write all copy; select graphic elements (photos, charts, logo, graphs, illustrations); create at least one of those graphic elements yourself; determine where all of the copy and graphics will go in the final piece; and, prepare a 3-5 minute presentation in which you discuss the overall project, the challenges you faced, and any recommendations you might have for your classmates.

Minimum requirements: 4-page newsletter/bulletin; 400 words of copy minimum (if you choose infographic, you must be prepared to create **two** to achieve the word-count minimum). Your project may be e-only, print-only, or a combo.

There are checkpoints indicated on your syllabus to help you stay on track. Helpful Hints:

1. Identify your organization and acquire materials early in the semester.
2. Don't wait until the last minute to design/format/produce your project.
3. Don't forget that our writing standards apply: typos or grammatical errors will adversely affect your grade.
4. Plan ahead!

Individual Video Project

For your video project, you will plan, shoot, and edit a video suitable for social media. The video will be brief (1-3 minutes). This video may be on any topic of your choice. These videos can be informative or persuasive, but they have to have a clear point. For example, you could make a video advertising a specific student club on campus, designed to recruit new members. Or you could make an informative video that shows off the lesser known statues on campus. Or you could make a video about campus dining options (and nearby food trucks!) that the admissions office might circulate on Facebook to get newly admitted students excited about coming to campus. The choice is yours—just make a video that is visually interesting, well-produced, thoughtful, and factual.

V. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Homework assignments	25%
Midterm exam	25%
Final video project	15%
Final design project	25%
Class participation / In-class assignments	10%
TOTAL	100%

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

c. Grading Standards

“A” projects have writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes and require only minor copy editing; 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 require more than minor editing and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. 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 need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many spelling, style or omission errors. 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 require excessive rewriting, have numerous errors and should not have been submitted.

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

d. Grading Timeline

Assignments will be graded and returned within two weeks from the time they were turned in. All feedback will be sent to the student via Blackboard (if the assignment was turned in via Blackboard) or e-mail.

VI. Assignment Rubrics

All rubrics and requirements for assignments and projects will be posted to Dropbox along with the assignment description.

VII. Assignment Submission Policy

Work is considered late when it is not turned in by the start of class on the day it is due (or by another specific time as stated in the assignment/syllabus). Late work is automatically deducted a whole grade (10 percent). Work turned in two weeks after the submission deadline is deducted a further 10 percent. You are strongly cautioned to allow plenty of time before an assignment is due to account for spotty Internet connections, computer glitches, traffic jams, and other impediments beyond your control. Do not put turning in an assignment off until the last minute. You are also strongly encouraged to save your work frequently and to periodically back up your files onto flash drives or remote backup servers. If you manage your time well, you should have enough of a cushion to account for pretty much all possible hindrances. For all other major impediments known in advance of a due date, such as family emergencies, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor to discuss possible deadline adjustments (note: instructor reserves the right not to honor a deadline extension request or to see documentation of emergency).

All assignments will be turned in via Blackboard, email or Dropbox. Instructor will provide instructions before each assignment.

VIII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All reading material will be posted to Blackboard each week.

IX. 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 Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

X. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/13/20 – 5/1/20)

Friday, January 31: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, January 31: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, February 4: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, February 28: Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, February 28: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Friday, April 3: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

XI. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

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.

Week 1 – January 16 – Presentation of syllabus; overview of class projects

The syllabus will be presented along with the course description and expectations. Overview of final individual and video projects.

We will explore what "controlled media" means, how and when it is used, and what forms we will be addressing in class.

Also, we will talk about the importance of storytelling and telling a good story. What makes a story compelling?

In-class assignment: Write about your favorite food. Why is it your favorite food? Does it have a special meaning, a sentimental story, or a cultural or family significance? This will be a timed assignment, about 10-15 minutes.

Homework assignment: Find an example of an article you consider to be “well written” and post it to the designated discussion forum on Blackboard. Provide ~100 words explaining why you think this piece of writing is particularly good.

Week 2 - January 23 – What constitutes “well written?”

This class will examine the fundamentals of good writing. Is it an exact science? Do we adhere to the strict “inverted pyramid” format you learned in 209 and 351a? Each student will present her/his selected article from the homework assignment and explain why he/she considers it to be well written. From that discussion, we’ll devise the Tenets of Good Writing for this course.

Homework assignment: Write a resume cover page convincing me why you are the ideal candidate for my entry-level job opening. Assume that the employer (me) has reviewed your resume and is deciding whether or not to interview you. How will you introduce yourself with the written word? How will your cover page stand out from the stack on my desk?

Week 3 - January 30 – Continue with good writing principles/Audience Segmentation

- **WEEKLY CAMPAIGN PRESENTATIONS BEGIN!**

Guest speaker: Talia Walsh, Communications Director, Heal the Bay

The instructor will unveil who would have been hired from last week’s in-class writing assignment based on how well it was written. Now, before you embark on any assignment, you need to understand with whom you are communicating. We’ll explore how the so-called Gen Xers and Millennials differ from Baby Boomers; how age, ethnicity, gender, geography, sexual orientation, and culture factor into messaging; and, which audiences you will likely encounter in the public relations field.

In-Class Assignment: You will be split into groups and given a generational group to research. You will research certain aspects of each group and present your findings to the class.

Homework Assignment: You will be given an organization to create a campaign for, and you will choose two generational groups to target. Write about what you would do for this campaign, what materials you might include, and why you crafted this campaign for these particular demographics.

Week 4 – February 6 – The Art of Persuasion

Guest speaker: TBD.

The written word is very powerful. It can shape *and change* minds. Persuasive writing can initiate action and change. We will discuss what makes various forms of communication persuasive. ****Come to class prepared to define and discuss your final project idea with the instructor.***

Homework assignment: Write a persuasive article on a topic of your choice. Minimum 400 words.

Week 5 – February 13 – The bits and bytes of writing online

We will review the differences between writing for the electronic medium that have become such an important piece of the media mix, and traditional writing. Emphasis will be on the content and overall design, with some very basic review of technical challenges and requirements (no HTML coding required!).

In-class assignment: You will take your persuasive article and craft headlines, summaries, and descriptions for various web formats, including the information that would show if your article appeared on a search engine.

Week 6 – February 20 – Controlled media: newsletters, bulletins, brochures

Guest speaker: Darrell Florence, founder of NewsMeme

Due to technological advances in both production and printing, these hallmarks of communication are thriving. What are they? Why do they work? Who reads them? When don't they work? How is the Internet changing the style and content of newsletters? We will review the newsletters you brought to class and discuss them as a group. We will discuss the fundamentals of newsletter design, layout and distribution.

In-class writing assignment: Write a newsletter article. Audience and topic TBD.

Week 7 – February 27 – Midterm

Midterm exam in class.

Week 8 – March 5 – Principles of layout and design; InDesign tutorial

You can learn to do desktop publishing by following an online tutorial, but first you need to understand the basics of design and layout. We will learn some of the basic elements of design during this hands-on workshop. You'll learn basic desktop publishing commands, how to import photos/images, how to select and use color.

In-class workshop/homework assignment: You will design a basic one-page newsletter.

Week 9 – March 12 – Infographics

Newly added to our repertoire of communication tools, the infographic has become a standard among savvy PR practitioners.

In-class assignment: Create an infographic in class as part of a group. Topic TBD.

Homework: Create an original infographic.

Week 10 – March 19 – SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES!!!!

ENJOY YOUR SPRING BREAK!

Week 11 – March 26 – Basic coding introduction / Web site creation

You've learned a little bit about creating a website in 351a using WordPress. Here, we'll have a discussion about using ready-made website builders (WordPress, Squarespace, Wix, Adobe Muse) and

learn a little code – a few basics that can help you when you get stuck, even when using a website builder.

In class assignment: This will be an in-class workshop where you will code along with your instructor and create a basic web page.

Week 12 – April 2 – Basic coding, continued

We'll build a basic web page and continue our discussion on code. You'll also learn some web resources on where to buy a domain, decode all the different types of hosting that's out there, and think about how to build your own portfolio for the future.

Homework assignment: Create a basic "About Me" web page.

Week 13 – April 9 – Video production: shooting

A guest speaker will demonstrate video shooting techniques and present an array of equipment and tools for shooting video with your smart phone!

Guest Speaker: TBD.

** Be prepared to share layout/content details for your final project during this class session.*

Week 14 – April 16 – Video production: editing

We'll talk about the basics of editing in this class.

Guest speaker: TBD.

Week 15 – April 23 – Work on final projects

This class time is for you to use as you'd like to get your work done.

Week 15 – April 30 – Presentation of final projects

Presentation of final videos and projects. Class survey will be taken at the beginning of class.

Final Exam Period – Tuesday, May 12, 8 a.m.-10 a.m. – Summative Experience

Summative experience.

XII. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

If you must miss a class, please give ample notice to your instructor via email. You will be responsible for catching up on any missed material and make any arrangements you need to catch up in class.

No late assignments will be accepted unless you have a medical emergency or other excused absence. Documentation for any excused absence must be provided.

There is no make-up for in-class assignments if you did not attend class.

Communication

Please make sure to check your USC email regularly. It will be the primary means of communication between you and your instructor. If you have any questions, please feel free to email your instructor or come speak to your instructor before or after class, or make an appointment at <https://calendly.com/jrosebud>.

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 or public relations class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” 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, 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

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

uscса.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

XIII. About Your Instructor

Jenn de la Fuente is a web developer with a graphic design background. She has run her own business, Rosebud Designs, since 2009 and developed a variety of print and web collateral for a range of clients, from nonprofits to small businesses. Her specialty is creating custom WordPress websites, and she has teamed up with other design firms and design businesses to create solutions for clients such as Rancho La Puerta, Heal the Bay, 826 Los Angeles, and 826 National. Before starting her business, Jenn worked in sports journalism as a reporter, copy editor, page designer, and web producer for a variety of newspapers: the Orange County Register, The News Journal (Wilmington, Delaware), and The Sacramento Bee. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Print Journalism from USC Annenberg, graduating in 2000, and has taught at Annenberg since 2014. She is an avid sports fan, longtime Trojan football season ticket-holder, a huge L.A. Kings fan, as well as a hockey player and curler.