



PR 250 Strategic Public Relations: An Introduction
4 units

Spring 2023 – Wednesdays – 5-8:20 p.m.

Section: 21077D

Location: Online

Instructor: Clarissa Beyah

Office: Online

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact Info: beyahc@usc.edu

Course Description

This course will familiarize students with strategies and practices in the growing field of public relations/strategic communication through practical application and group simulation of public relations and advertising strategic frameworks. Students will be required to analyze current events and cases and devise practical implementation approaches. The practical implementation will include simulation activities where students are asked to operate in groups as agency and in-house communication teams through several (3-4) simulation scenarios. This course is the foundation of the public relations program.

Student Learning Outcomes

By course end, the student should be able to:

- Explain modern-day public relations and advertising concepts and practices
- Practice critical thinking, strategy and campaign planning and integration in a communication context
- Demonstrate the capacity to extract actionable and defensible insights from research and information
- Apply an ethical reasoning method to public relations and advertising campaigns
- Explain why stakeholders, uncontrolled external factors and ethics are critical elements in campaign development
- Demonstrate the ability to strategically identify and address opportunities, challenges and key constituencies for a communication campaign
- Deconstruct and present a campaign analysis using several PR and Advertising strategic planning frameworks (ROPES, PESO, Message Mapping, 4-Pillar Strategic PR Framework, etc.)
- Develop and present original, integrated campaign plans based on research, strategy and actionable insights

Course Notes

The class is a mix of lecture and group learning through agency and in-house PR team simulations. Students will participate and contribute their thoughts and insights through continuous application of concepts, PR frameworks, theories, and implementation approaches. Blackboard is used for updates, posting homework and assignments and to take quizzes and exams.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Class Participation and Case Study Discussion (15% of grade)

Students are expected to regularly attend and actively participate in classes, complete all required readings before each class session, and contribute to class discussions and case study reviews to understand what the best PR and advertising programs entail. 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.

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:

- Industry news/updates – You must stay informed of current topics in the public relations industry. You are required to read PR and advertising industry or other news and be prepared each week to discuss something interesting you came across. Each week students will be asked to share news events and relate them to the lesson.
- 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 130-150 pts	SATISFACTORY 90-129 pts	UNACCEPTABLE 0-89 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.
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Quizzes (20% of grade) and Midterm Exam (25% of grade)

Quizzes and midterm exam will be based on work covered in the textbook readings and class lectures.

Team Simulation (part of homework/assignments 10% of grade and part of class participation)

You will experience what is like to operate as a PR and advertising agency and as an in-house team and be required to apply the concepts to creating PR and ad plans. Simulation teams will create plans and at least one full-campaign, which will be part of your final project.

Final group project/presentation (30% of grade)

Development of a public relations campaign to be presented during the final class and **an individual PR Portfolio that you can use professionally—for the purposes of employment, internships, scholarships, etc.**

Grading

a. Grading Breakdown

Description of assessments and corresponding points and percentage of grade.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Quizzes (based on textbook and lectures)	20	20%
Homework/Assignments	10	10%
Midterm Exam	25	25%
Final [Group Paper, Group Presentation, AND Individual Portfolio (10% EACH)]	30	30%
Class Participation	15	15%
TOTAL	100	100%

b. Grading Scale

Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range		
95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+ (D plus)
90% to 94%: A- (A minus)	77% to 79%: C+ (C plus)	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+ (B plus)	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D- (D minus)
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C- (C minus)	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

For written papers, the grading standards are as follows:

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. A grade of F also will be assigned for any plagiarized and/or fabricated material that is submitted.

Grading Timeline

Assignments, quizzes and the midterm will be graded within 2-3 weeks after they are due. Grades are updated and tracked in Blackboard.

Assignment Rubrics

Rubrics for assignments will be provided with assignments.

Assignment Submission Policy

1. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated. I will accept early assignments, but I will not accept late assignments. Late assignments will automatically be given a grade of 0/F.
2. Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard, unless I have given you different instructions.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

REQUIRED TEXT: Introduction to Public Relations: Strategic, Digital and Socially Responsible Communicate: Janis Teruggi Page & Lawrence J. Parnell; 2nd Edition; SAGE Publishing ISBN 978-1-5443-9200-4

In addition to the required textbook, you must keep up with current events. Please browse one or more of the following PR news websites. Periodically we have class discussions based on news/case studies from these news sites.

- prweek.com (Annenberg students receive free subscriptions)
- publicrelationstoday.com
- prnewsonline.com
- prdaily.com
- odwyerpr.com
- adweek.com

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.

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Add/Drop Dates for Session 001

(15 weeks: 1/9/2023 – 4/28/2023; Final Exam Period: 5/3-10/2023)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20231/calendar/>

Last day to add: Friday, January 27, 2023

Last day to drop without a mark of "W" and receive a refund: Friday, January 27, 2023

Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Saturday, January 28, 2023 [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Audit:

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Last day to withdraw without a "W" on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, February 24, 2023 [Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply.]

*Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

Last day to drop with a mark of "W": Friday, April 7, 2023

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: Please check Blackboard for announcements on homework, quizzes, writing assignments or tests. 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 Date: 1/11	PR 250 Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course overview ▪ Syllabus review ▪ Expectations ▪ Policies and procedures Simulation Team Formation 1 (First Round Simulation Teams Announced) Origins of Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is public relations? ▪ Misconceptions about public relations ▪ The history of PR – How it got started; how it has evolved into a strategic function ▪ The functions of PR ▪ ROPES model of public relations 	Preface, chapters 1 and 2 Simulation Formation 1 Fundamentals: Students chose to be agencies or in-house teams Work product: Theories, Page Principles, PESO; ROPES	

Week 2 Date: 1/18	The Public Relations Process: Research and Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why is research so important; how is it done; how to use it ▪ Common PR research methods ▪ The role of strategy with regard to research 	Chapter 4	
Week 3 Date: 1/25	The Public Relations Process: Planning, Objectives and Tactics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning: The value of a communications plan; how to create a plan ▪ The role of strategy with regard to planning ▪ Putting plan to action ▪ The role of strategy with regard to tactics 	Chapter 5	
Week 4 Date: 2/1	The Public Relations Process: Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to know if we succeeded ▪ Common PR evaluation methods 	Chapter 5 Simulation Team Formation #2 Agency- PR Strategy Creation for client: Agency name and brand, Research on issues Strategic PR Framework- Message Creation, Plan Preparation; Story Activation, Ongoing Amplification	
Week 5 Date: 2/8	Reaching Audiences through Mass Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collateral materials: What are they? How are they used? Mass media: radio, TV, newspapers, blogs, etc.	Chapters 6, 7 and 8 Second Round Simulation Teams Announced	
Week 6 Date: 2/15	Public Opinion/Persuasion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why public opinion matters ▪ Tips/best practices to help tell our story and persuade audiences 		
Week 7 Date: 2/22	Meeting and Events PR campaigns often include large and small meetings and events. We'll review types of events, event planning concepts and best practices.		
Week 8 Date: 3/1	Round 2 Group Presentations & Individual Midterm		
Week 9 Date: 3/8	PR in Corporations Corporate Social Responsibility, community relations, reputation management, social	Chapters 10 and 11- Corporations	

	responsibility, employee communications and investor relations Third Round Simulation Team Announced	Simulation Formation 3 Corporate Comms Team- Strategy Creation as in-house team; Simulation casework based on current company in the news	
Spring Break Date: 3/15	No Class	Chapter 12	
Week 10 Date: 3/22	Issues Management and Crisis Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are conflicts and crisis situations ▪ Conflict management lifecycle ▪ Strategies for dealing with issues, risks and crisis ▪ Restoring corporate reputation 	Chapter 3	
Week 11 Date: 3/29	Ethics and Law in Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethical guidelines in PR ▪ How does law affect PR ▪ FINAL Simulation Team Announced- These are the teams that will go into course Final Presentations together 	FINAL SIMULATION TEAM FORMATION	
Week 12 Date: 4/5	The Future of PR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss changes PR executives, professionals, scholars and students foresee in the PR industry in the future ▪ Review research studies conducted by USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations. Reports include Relevance Report / Global Communications Report 		
Week 13 Date: 4/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specialty Practice Areas ▪ What is PR and communications in sports, entertainment, non-profits, education and government 		
Week 14 Date: 4/19	USC COURSE EVALUATIONS Preparation for final		
Week 15 Date: 4/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final will include final simulation group presentations; group paper; AND individual portfolio submissions. 		
FINAL EXAM PERIOD Date: 5/3, 4:30-6:30 p.m.	Summative experience		

Policies and Procedures

What I Expect from You

Class starts on time. Since Simulations are a core part of this class, your participation will be evaluated by both me and your teammates. If you miss group meetings, don't contribute equally to group assignments, and have frequent absences (including always having your camera turned off)—your grade will suffer.

Communication

Students should feel free if needed to email or phone the instructor outside of class to ask questions, get assignment clarifications or to arrange a one-on-one meeting if not convenient during the instructor's normal office hours. Student inquiries will be responded to within 48 hours. If the matter is urgent, please send me a text message. I will share my cell number in class for that purpose.

If you must miss class, you are still 100% responsible for watching the zoom recording, doing the classwork AND homework- and submitting them on time by the next class. Missing a class does not exempt you from class work, and you will receive a reduced participation grade if you do not complete the assignments done during the class you missed and submit them before the next class.

- Assignments are due to me at the time I designate. All assignments must 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.
- **There will be no make-ups for the midterm or final exam.**
- If you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments **from a fellow student**. I do not email notes or handouts.
- Class participation is expected and will help your final grade. Everyone is expected to contribute. Lack of participation will reduce your participation grade.
- 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 are for class work only. If I have to stop class to ask you to stop using your cell phone or other device, you will lose participation points for that class.
- 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.
- The syllabus is our guideline and will change during the course of the semester to accommodate current events and speaker schedules.
- You are expected to check Blackboard every week for updates on homework and assignments. 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. Reach out to me. I am here for you. **beyahc@usc.edu**
2. I am fair. When you get an assignment back from me, you should 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. There will be in-class writing, homework and other assignments. Please suggest topics that are of interest to you, and I will do my best to incorporate those ideas into assignments so that we can broaden our horizons into more diverse writing.
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 by appointment. Ready access is through email. I will respond to all messages, unless my message service indicates otherwise.

Communication

I am always available to speak or meet with students to answer questions, review assignments, or share career advice. Please feel free to contact me by email to set up a time to meet. I do my best to reply to all emails within 48 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 or public relations class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems Academic Conduct

The USC Student Handbook (https://policy.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/USC_StudentCode_August2022.pdf)

Academic Integrity

USC's Unifying Value of integrity is a foundational principle that inspires the community to match its values to its actions. Academic integrity is ultimately the sole guarantor of the legitimacy of one's education, and therefore, is vitally important not just for oneself, but for the entire USC community. The value of all USC degrees is negatively impacted by violations of academic integrity. In the classroom, general principles of academic integrity include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles.

Academic Integrity violations (academic dishonesty) include, but are not limited to:

Plagiarism and Cheating

- The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.
- Re-using any portion of one's own work (essay, term paper, project, or other assignment) previously submitted without citation of such and without permission of the instructor(s) involved.
- Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers, including drafts. Also, all students involved in collaborative work (as permitted by the instructor) are expected to proofread the work and are responsible for all particulars of the final draft.
- Acquisition of academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or other assignments, from any source and the subsequent presentation of those materials as the student's own work, or providing academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or assignments that another student submits as their own work.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

https://catalogue.usc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=16&ent_oid=3459

"Since its founding, the 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."

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.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

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

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

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273- 8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086

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.

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

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

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411

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

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

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.

Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students' continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

About Your Instructor

Clarissa Beyah is currently the Chief Communications Officer [Union Pacific railroad](#) and a Professor of Professional Practice at USC.

Clarissa's expertise spans professional services, healthcare, technology, transportation and utilities sectors. Clarissa is the President and Founder of the [Writer's Block Ink](#) – a nonprofit organization dedicated to cultivating and launching diverse young leaders using the arts. Since its inception the Writer's Block has helped more than 1,000 at-risk youth use the arts to transform their lives.

Clarissa has led teams on nearly every continent and served as a chief communication advisor for numerous Fortune 50 companies. Some of her prior roles include Vice President, Global Communications, Aon; Vice President, Pepco Holdings Communications, Exelon; Chief Communications Officer, GE Transportation; Global Communications Leader GE Healthcare IT; and Vice President, Corporate Communications, Northwestern Mutual. Clarissa spent a decade at Pfizer and held several roles including head of Communications for Europe and of Pfizer's first generics business unit, which grew from \$2B to \$18B in four years.

Clarissa is an educator with a passion for engaging and empowering youth. She founded the Writer's Block Ink to help at-risk youth *ignite social change on the page and stage*. Writer's Block productions address social issues ranging from domestic abuse to genocide. Youth enter as artists and rise to become leaders. Past Writer's Block participants hold community leadership roles across the nation.