

PR 351B: Multichannel Strategy and Content Creation

4 Units

Fall 2024 – Thursdays – 4-7:20 p.m.

Section: 21204R

Location: ANN 413

Instructor: Hayley Burgess

Office Hours: By appointment only.

Office hours can be conducted via Zoom.

Contact Info: hburgess@usc.edu; 626-497-2341

I. Course Description

In this class, we will examine media that is created and published by today's public relations practitioner. New platforms have enabled brands, organizations and individuals to become publishers and directly engage their audiences. This class examines strategies and tactics needed to be an effective publisher including digital content created for social and owned media channels.

This course is designed to teach students about the array of public relations tools available to them, with particular emphasis on writing, digital content creation and production of communications collateral. Students will be exposed to audience research and segmentation, social media and digital communications writing, multi-media content creation, feature writing, newsletter preparation, basic principles of design, writing for the ear, creating and making presentations 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, video production and oral presentations will be assigned.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Develop and apply proper research, writing and editing for professional-quality social media content, videos, newsletters, and PR controlled content for external and internal audiences.
- Demonstrate basic promotional video production for product demonstrations, crisis response and other PR driven scenarios.
- Construct basic design and layout with the use of design software.
- Produce visual elements such as photos, graphics, infographics, special effects and motion graphics.
- Identify and communicate with an array of audiences.

III. Course Elements

- In-class writing, content creation and video production assignments
- Take-home writing and content creation assignments
- Midterm
- Final project
- Participation
- Reading

IV. Text/Reference Materials

- Reading assignments will be posted to Blackboard throughout the semester, along with handouts and other readings.

WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU:

1. Class starts on time. Chronic tardiness will affect your final grade, as will absences. 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 submitted as directed. Assignments completed that do not follow directions will be graded lower. If you are absent, you are responsible for getting your homework to me 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. I do not email notes or handouts.
5. 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.
6. The syllabus is our guideline and will change during the course of the semester to accommodate current events and speaker schedules.
7. 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 love teaching and come to class each week with enthusiasm and a strong desire to help you learn. My goal is to help you prepare for the world of public relations.
2. I am open to your questions and welcome the opportunity to discuss any issues concerning you. Please don't hesitate to speak with me about anything.
3. I value transparency and honesty. 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.
4. 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 most weeks.
5. 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.
6. I am available for questions and conversations after class and by appointment. Please contact me via email for any questions or to make an appointment.

V. Assignments

- Class participation
- In-class assignments/Homework
- Midterm exam
- Video Project
- Final Project

VI. Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments are due on the dates specified. Without prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will not be accepted.

VII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

You must bring your laptop to every class. 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.

VIII. 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.

IX. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/21/2023 – 12/01/2023; Final Exam Period: (15 weeks: 8/26/2024 – 12/6/2024; Final Exam Period: 12/11-18/2024)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20243/calendar/>

Last day to add: Friday, September 13, 2024

Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund: Friday, September 13, 2024

Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Friday, September 13, 2024 [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, September 17, 2024

Last day to withdraw without a “W” on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, October 11, 2024 [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, November 15, 2024

X. Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Class Participation	10%
Midterm	25%
In-Class Assignments / Homework	25%
Video Project	15%
Final Project	25%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale

Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range		
95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B- (B minus)	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

Grading Standards

“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.

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.*

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

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

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable / Due Dates
Week 1 Aug. 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student/Prof. introductions ▪ Course and Syllabus Review ▪ “Controlled Media” ▪ Internal Communication ▪ Brand Piece 	Favorite Brand Well-written article	September 5
Week 2 Sept. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Article Review ▪ Reverse Engineering an Article ▪ The Cover Letter 	Vehicle Cover Letter Reverse Engineered News Release	September 12
Week 3 Sept. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audience Segmentation & Targeting ▪ Writing for Audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Lay, Expert + Managerial 	Uncover the ‘Best Brand’ & ‘Product for Segmented Millennials’	September 19
Week 4 Sept. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More on Writing for Audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Lay 	500-word Byline	September 26

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expert ➤ Managerial ▪ Bylines 		
Week 5 Sept. 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Byline Leads ▪ Byline Conclusions ▪ Newsletters ▪ Power/Value of Newsletters 	E-Newsletters (<i>SEO links to stories</i>)	October 3
Week 6 Oct. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing for the electronic medium ▪ Media mix and traditional writing ▪ Blog stories (Internal Comms) ▪ In-Design Tutorial ▪ SEO'ing ▪ Video Pre-Storyboarding ▪ Midterm Review 	Blog	October 17
Week 7 Oct. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Class: Fall Recess 	Fall Recess	
Week 8 Oct. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Midterm 	Midterm	October 20
Week 9 Oct. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adobe Illustrator: Creating Infographics (Annenberg Digital Lounge) ▪ Infographics 	Adobe Illustrator: Creating Infographics (Annenberg Digital Lounge) Telling 3 stories with infographics	October 31
Week 10 Oct. 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More story telling with Infographics ▪ Photo of a scene ▪ Final Project Discussion 	Telling the story with 3 astonishing photos and their infographic	November 7
Week 11 Nov. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Video Production ▪ Storyboarding 	Individual video	November 14
Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Team Video Production 	Group Video Work	November 21

Nov. 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Team storyboarding 		
Week 13 Nov. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group Storyboard Discussion/Shooting Content ▪ Video Editing 	Group Video	
Week 14 Nov. 28	No Class: Thanksgiving Break		
Week 15 Dec. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final Project Prep ▪ Group Video Presentation 	Present Group and Project Pitch	
Final Exam Period Dec. 12, 7-9 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final Project Due/Presentation 	Presentation	December 12

XII. Policies and Procedures

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

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 public relations or journalism 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

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

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.

Generative AI Policy

The USC Annenberg Public Relations and Advertising program views generative AI as an addition to USC's digital literacy tools that students are encouraged to experiment with and use inside and outside the classroom. Students may use generative AI tools such as Chat GPT to help complete their class assignments, but must disclose such use in the bibliography section. Students are solely responsible for the accuracy of their documents, regardless of whether they were completed with the aid of generative AI.

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](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu) - (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)

<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)

<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.

XIII. Professor Biography:

Hayley Burgess is a strategic communications professional in Los Angeles, CA. For nearly a decade, she has dedicated her career to media, messaging, and narrative change to advance civil rights and social justice. She has worked for several nonprofit organizations both in-house and as a freelance consultant, with projects ranging from federal Supreme Court litigation to organizer-led campaigns at the state and local level in places like California, Tennessee, New York, and Wisconsin.

Hayley is committed to telling compelling stories, sharing often overlooked truths, and working to ensure the voices of people most impacted by an issue are centered in campaigns and media coverage. One of her favorite parts of her job is working across traditional and digital media platforms to tell new, insightful stories that bring attention to voices too often excluded from mainstream conversations. Hayley has overseen the development of new websites and social media accounts for various organizations and is experienced in leading design and content strategies for campaigns and other entities. She believes in a people and community-centered approach to communications work, which is grounded in her conviction that everyone should have the freedom to live full lives with their family and community.

Hayley currently lives in her hometown of Altadena, CA. In her free time, she likes to hike in the local foothills, skateboard with friends, and take long road trips.