

## PR 209: Effective Writing for Strategic Public Relations and Advertising 4 units

**Spring 2025 – Thursdays – 3-6:20 p.m.**

**Section:** 21067D

**Location:** ANN 413

**Instructor:** Lisa Cracchiolo Tush

**Office Hours:** by appointment via Zoom

**Contact Info:** [tush@usc.edu](mailto:tush@usc.edu) or (818) 416-5626

### Course Description

This is the first course of a three-part journey that includes PR 351a and 351b.

PR 209 is an intensive, skills-based writing course designed and focused on preparing and writing materials for use in media relations. It also provides students with the following:

1. Familiarity with proper writing styles with sensitivity to the requirements of media and publications.
2. Competence in writing mechanics and grammar, headlines, labels, structure and the ability to express information clearly to the intended audience(s).
3. Familiarity with the Inverted Pyramid and prioritizing facts.
4. Ability to judge what constitutes news and the nuances of how it is defined by a wide variety of media.

### Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

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

- Write with clarity, insight and skill.
- Judge the importance of information, set priorities and tailor writing to meet the needs of different media and reporters.
- Edit and proofread material so it is publishable.

Through in-class assignments and homework, students will learn to organize and plan their writing both with and without deadline pressure. Some assignments will cover the essentials of news and the basic building blocks of providing information; others will include elements designed to provide insight for working with the news media.

Students are expected to take on their assignments with a professional attitude and a willingness to learn new techniques. Writing solid media materials takes **practice** and hard work. \*\*\* Based on the progress of each student, certain exercises and/or assignments may be changed. \*\*\*

Classes will include writing exercises and may include a weekly quiz. Some exercises take place during the class and are in addition to take-home assignments. Some writing will be on deadline, which is an essential skill for public relations.

### Course Notes

Copies of lecture slides, examples of assignments and additional tutorial material are uploaded to Brightspace.

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

**Homework:** Various readings, writing assignments (media materials), and/or research. Points are deducted for incomplete assignments and for AP style (Associated Press) errors.

**Quizzes:** Based on readings, AP Stylebook, grammar, and proofreading. Answer keys are used to assess accuracy of quiz answers.

**Writing drills (in-class and homework):** Students will draft an array of writing assignments (media materials). Points are deducted for incomplete assignments and for AP style (Associated Press) errors.

**Midterm exam:** There is both a “take-home” section and an “in-class” section of the exam; the “take-home” section is a writing assignment (create a news release); the “in-class” section is a series of drills to test spelling, grammar, AP style, proofreading and writing assignments. Students must take both sections of the midterm to pass the class.

**Class participation:** You will receive points for attendance as well as active response to readings, posing questions and comments.

**Final project:** See final project description on page 10 of this syllabus. Points are deducted for incomplete assignments and for AP style (Associated Press) errors.

## Grading

### a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment		% of Grade
Homework assignments <b>(points will vary)</b>		20%
Quizzes <b>(points will vary)</b>		5%
Writing drills (in-class) <b>(points will vary)</b>		15%
Midterm exam <b>(200 pts.)</b>		25%
Class participation		10%
Final project <b>(135 pts.)</b>		25%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>

### b. Grading Scale (final grades are NOT rounded up)

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

### c. Grading Standards

A Range (A = 95-100 A- = 90-94)	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; quote as required). Excellent organization and flow; original thinking. Showed creativity in packaging/distribution method. High end of scale: publishable today as is. Made me want to keep reading! You will not get in the A range if you have any misspelled words.
B Range (B+ = 87-89 B = 84-86 B- = 80-82)	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.
C Range (C+ = 77-79 C = 74-76 C- = 70-73)	More than 5 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.
D Range (D+ 67-69 D = 64-66 D- 60-63)	More than 10 errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten. Poorly organized with little or no understanding or journalistic style/standards. Needs to work with writing coach.
Failing (F = 59 or below)	Late, not rewritable or no assignment turned in.

### d. Grading Timeline

Graded **homework** assignments are due **Tuesdays by 9:00 p.m.** following each class session, though this may vary. Students can expect to receive their grades and feedback the following day before the next class session on Monday. Graded **“in-class” writing assignments** are typically due by the end of each class session unless otherwise noted. Students can expect to receive their grades and feedback within one or two days of all submissions.

### Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments will be due via Brightspace. All assignments will be created in **Microsoft Word** so that I may edit directly on your work. Assignments not following directions will be graded lower. If you are absent, you are responsible for submitting missed in-class assignments and homework when it is due. **Late assignments might only receive 50% of the allocated points. Assignments more than one week late can receive 0 points.**

### Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

1. *Public Relations Writing, Strategies & Structures* by Doug Newsom and Jim Haynes. Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Eleventh Edition, 2017 (or other more recent edition).
2. *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. **Latest edition required.**

3. Dictionaries and other writing references are indispensable.
4. It's impossible to learn about writing and improve your writing skills without reading topical news and feature writing, and watching quality news broadcasts. Be regular readers of newspapers, magazines, trade publications, websites and other publications as required by assignment or your own interest. You should be familiar with <http://www.prnewswire.com> and <http://www.businesswire.com> and other press release services. **(See separate instructions on the PR 209 Brightspace page for free student subscriptions.)**

### 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 or call (213-740-5555).

### Add/Drop Dates for Session 001

**15 weeks: 1/13/2025 – 5/2/2025; Final Exam Period: 5/7-14/2025)**

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20251/registration-calendar/>

**Last day to add:** Friday, January 31, 2025

**Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund:** Friday, January 31, 2025

**Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit:** Friday, January 31, 2025 [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, February 4, 2025

**Last day to withdraw without a "W" on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade:** Friday, February 28, 2025 [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 11, 2025

### 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. More detailed lessons will be provided each week on Brightspace.*

### **WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS – FUNDAMENTALS OF WRITING FOR PESO MEDIA (Jan. 16)**

- Introductions, detailed review of syllabus, texts, policies, and components of media materials. Review the PESO model (paid-earned-shared-owned), AP style (Associated Press) and the Inverted Pyramid.
- Introduction/orientation to coursework on Brightspace

#### In-Class Assignment:

- Interview a classmate and write a one-page bio with title (200 words) and submit by the end of this class.

#### Homework:

- Find two (2) news releases (not news articles) on the Internet. Identify what you believe to be the intended key messages. Write a brief report (1-2 paragraphs) with your summary about the messages and the target audiences for each news release. Be prepared to come to class to talk about the key messages being conveyed.

- Readings: Newsom - Ch. 1 Public Relations and the Writer and Ch. 3 Writing to Clarify; AP Style – review the Punctuation Guide, and entries for letters A, B
- No quiz

### **WEEK 2: INVERTED PYRAMID, HEADLINES, LEADS (Jan. 23)**

- Review news releases. Discuss the Inverted Pyramid and why we use it. Where do third-party sources fit into news releases? Citations, formatting documents, etc.
- Look at different types of headlines, sub-heads and lead paragraphs. Discuss how editorial writing in news media differs from PR writing.
- Introduction to the final project - the information kit.

#### **In-Class Assignment:**

- Review *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* for headlines, sub-heads and lead paragraphs; analyze verb tenses.
- Practice writing a lead graph for one of three stories (Centerville, Chick-fil-A)

#### **Homework:**

- Watch three separate morning, afternoon, and/or evening newscasts. Listen to one AM radio news show. Be prepared to talk about your observations of where the “news” is coming from. Try to figure out if there are PR-generated news stories.
- Readings: Newsom - Ch. 6 Research for the PR Writer and Ch.7 Writing to Persuade; AP Style - entries for letters C, D, E, F
- Quiz - homophones

### **WEEK 3: UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE + THE ART OF PITCHING (Jan. 30)**

- An immersive discussion to understand how media outlets operate, what types of stories they look for, and how stories get chosen and created.

#### **In-Class Assignment:**

- The art of writing a subject line.
- Write three versions of an email subject line.
- Practice writing a pitch letter.

#### **Homework:**

- Write a headline and lead paragraph for each of two news events (Subaru and ball of lint).
- Begin thinking about the final project – topics/subjects.
- Readings: Newsom - Ch. 9 Writing for Public Media and Ch. 10 Email, Memos; AP Style - entries for letters G, H, I, J, K
- Quiz - AP style, abbreviations (1-3)

### **WEEK 4: KEY MESSAGING + WRITING A NEWS RELEASE (Feb. 6)**

- Discuss key messaging and how it connects to audiences.
- Discuss the components of a news release and what it is meant to accomplish. What is the client/organization trying to achieve?

#### **In-Class Assignment:**

- Introduction to Patagonia/United Repair Centre partnership; develop key messages.
- Begin a news release for Patagonia/URC (contact info., headline, sub-head, lead graph).

Homework:

- Add a nut graph (body paragraph) to the Patagonia/URC news release.
- Readings: Newsom - Ch. 4 Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation and Ch. 5 Social Media Writing; AP Style - entries for letters L, M, N, O, P
- Quiz - AP style, abbreviations (4-6)

**WEEK 5: QUOTES AND STATEMENTS + PROOF-READING (Feb. 13)**

- No fluff allowed. We'll practice writing quotes for news releases and corporate statements in a variety of settings.
- Who gets quoted in PR materials? Who gets to talk to the media? What do we think about "No comment"?
- Review best practices and processes for proof-reading.
- We continue to review examples and practice writing news releases. Discuss how releases conclude (elaboration graphs and boilerplates).

In-Class Assignment:

- Write two spokesperson quotes for the Patagonia/URC news release.
- Improve a media pitch letter
- Develop spokesperson quotes for several news releases

Homework:

- Add an elaboration graph and boilerplate to the Patagonia/URC news release.
- Find 3 examples of quotes in news releases or news articles. Be prepared to talk about how PR was involved and how those quotes impact the PR objectives/outcomes.
- Readings: Newsom – Ch. 8 Media Contact; AP Style - entries for letters Q, R, S, T, U, V
- Quiz - AP style, abbreviations (7-9)

**WEEK 6: NEWS RELEASES + ACTIVE/PASSIVE LANGUAGE (Feb. 20)**

- Using active voice rather than passive voice.

In-Class Assignment:

- Active voice exercise
- Revise a news release (National Down Syndrome Celebrity PSA)

Homework:

- Readings: AP Style - entries for letters W, X, Y, Z
- Quiz – AP style, capitalization (1-5)

**WEEK 7: INFORMATION/MEDIA KITS – THE ROLE THEY PLAY, COMPONENTS (Feb. 27)**

- Review examples. Overview of kits. How does a journalist use a kit? Which components are imperative and which are just nice to have? Information kits for other audiences (investors, employees, merchants, residents).
- Review examples of fact sheets. What types of facts belong in a PR strategy? What makes facts newsworthy?
- Discuss how fact sheets contribute to meeting the objective of the client/organization.

In-Class Assignment:

- Write a fact sheet for Patagonia/URC.
- Write a fact sheet for the Down Syndrome PSA.

Homework:

- Complete the “take-home” section of the midterm. The “take-home” section is a news release that must be written (topic TBD) and submitted to Brightspace by **March 4 at midnight**. No late submissions will be accepted. Ask your questions before class ends because the instructor will not field any questions after the “take-home” section is made available online.
- Prepare for the “in-class” section of the midterm.

**WEEK 8: MIDTERM (Mar. 6)**

- Midterm (in-class portion)

In-Class Assignment:

- Complete the “in-class” section of the midterm.
- Writing a “local-market” news release. What are they and how do they differ from releases for national distribution? Write a complete “local-market” news release for one of the MacArthur Fellows awarded the 2024 MacArthur Fellowship.

Homework:

- Readings: Newsom - Ch. 14 Crisis Communications
- Quiz – AP style, capitalization (6-10)

**WEEK 9: THE INFORMATION KIT – YOUR FINAL PROJECT (Mar. 13)**

- Review of the final project (elements and schedule of production)
  - Preview samples from past classes
  - Brainstorm appropriate companies and projects

In-Class Assignment:

- Research and propose a company/organization and a newsworthy event/product introduction/partnership, etc. You will write a one-page proposal and defend why it is an appropriate choice.

Homework:

- Finalize your proposal for the company you are choosing for your final project. Develop a list of elements (see syllabus) for your information kit and briefly describe the contents of each element.

**WEEK 10: SPRING BREAK -- No Class – (Mar. 20)**

**WEEK 11: THE INFORMATION KIT – CONFIRMING THE PROJECTS AND ELEMENTS (Mar. 27)**

- Review selected companies/organizations and “announcements” for the final projects.
- Problem-solve issues related to the projects, adjust, and conduct additional research if necessary for your project.

In-Class Assignment:

- Begin writing the news release for the selected topic of your information kit (headline and subhead plus the first three graphs – lead, nut, quote).

Homework:

- Complete the news release for your information kit (add elaboration and boilerplate); proofread and edit.

- Do research for your information kit; gather facts and information for each component.

### **WEEK 12: INTRODUCTION TO ADVERTISING COPYWRITING (Apr. 3)**

- Review a series of print and TV ads and discuss the general tenets of good/great ads.
- What is a **creative brief** and why is it important; review the **4C's** of research on audience composition and insights.
- The fundamentals of advertising copywriting; the process.

#### *In-class Assignment:*

- Search through magazines to evaluate ads against a list of criteria.

#### *Homework:*

- Watch Vance Kim's presentation deck.

### **WEEK 13: ADVERTISING COPYWRITING – Part 1 (Apr. 10)**

- Delving into the 4C's and creative brief (cont.).
- Trying your hand at headlines and body copy.

#### *In-Class Assignment:*

- During this session you will deconstruct an ad into its **creative brief**.
- During this session you will craft a **4C's** document and a **creative brief** for a selected "client."
- We will rewrite headlines and body copy for several "not so good" ads.

#### *Homework:*

- Find two print ads that you believe are effective in their use of copy and then find two that you believe are **ineffective**.
- Develop a "brainstorm" page of words/phrases to be used to develop ad copy for an organization TBD.
- Begin working on the additional elements of your information kit.

### **WEEK 14: ADVERTISING COPYWRITING – Part 2 (Apr. 17)**

- Discuss the use of metaphor, simile, understatement, and hyperbole in ad writing.
- The power of the billboard and 8 other types of outdoor advertising. Opportunities for thinking out of the box.
- Review and critique 51 ad examples!

#### *In-Class Assignment:*

- Take an "ineffective" ad and develop a "brainstorm" page of words/terms.
- Use the "brainstorm" page to develop a new headline and body copy.

#### *Homework:*

- Take a second "ineffective" ad and develop a "brainstorm" page of words/terms.
- Use the "brainstorm" page to develop new ad copy.

### **WEEK 15: SOCIAL MEDIA + MEDIA ADVISORY + BIOGRAPHIES + MEDIA PITCHES (Apr. 24)**

- Understand how to write for various social media platforms.
- What are media advisories and how are they used? Discuss essential information that must be included in a media advisory (also known as a media alert) and how reporters/editors use them.
- Formal, fun and hybrid versions of biographies will be reviewed.



- Review examples of media pitch letters and email subject lines.
- Brainstorm “client” news and discuss target media.
- Students to submit course evaluations.

*In-Class Assignment:*

- Create copy for several social media situations with time limits.
- Write a media advisory for one event.
- Take a formal official biography for a person of note and rewrite it in a more “conversational” style.
- Rewrite two pitch letters, correcting errors and enticing journalists to inquire more about the topic(s) being pitched.

*Homework:*

- Write the fact sheet for your information kit. DO NOT copy/paste from an existing fact sheet that you find online. Put the information into your own words.
- Write a biography (with photo) for your information kit if you are including one. DO NOT copy/paste from an existing biography that you find online. Put the information into your own words.
- Continue to work on your information kit.
- Begin writing the strategy memo and PowerPoint deck (limited to 5 slides) for your information kit; practice your 5 min. presentation using your PowerPoint deck.

**WEEK 16: PERFECTING THE MEDIA PITCH (May 1)**

- Review examples of media pitch letters and email subject lines.
- Brainstorm “client” news and discuss target media.

*In-Class Assignment:*

- Write two pitch letters to different media outlets, entice journalists to inquire more about the topic(s) being pitched.
- Final check of written elements for the information kit (final project)

*Homework:*

- Write a biography (with photo) for your information kit if you are including one. DO NOT copy/paste from an existing biography that you find online. Put the information into your own words.
- Continue to work on your information kit.
- Finalize the strategy memo and PowerPoint deck (limited to 5 slides) for your information kit; practice your 5 min. presentation using your PowerPoint deck.
- Finalize and proofread your information it; upload to Brightspace prior to the presentation date

\* Students will submit USC course evaluations

**FINAL EXAM PERIOD (5/7-5/14): PRESENTATIONS OF FINAL PROJECTS (Tues., May 13, 2-4 pm)**

- You will present your completed kit to your classmates using Google slides (or comparable platform).

## PR 209 FINAL PROJECT: Detailed Information Kit –

You will prepare a detailed information kit (worth 135 pts.) on a company or organization of your choice. You are responsible for researching and writing all the material. All content must be original and writing must be your own. **All final materials must be submitted in WORD format (.docx) so I can edit/comment directly on them. DO NOT submit docs in .pdf format.**

The topic may reflect the type of public relations you think you might be interested in. For example, if you are interested in corporate social responsibility, Tom's Shoes or Ben & Jerry's might be interesting organizations for you to examine. However, your kit should not be a mirror reflection of materials and strategies already employed by an existing company. Unless you select or create a brand-new organization, you should not plan to prepare a corporate information kit. Rather, you should select some newsworthy aspect of that organization to highlight. It may be a fictional situation. For example, Starbucks' new philanthropy initiative (not real), or Lush Cosmetics' partnership with Time's Up (also not real).

Here are examples of past topics and their "news" –

- Ralph Lauren – Debut of fall fashion line in conjunction with National Park Service philanthropy
- Soho House – Opening of a Palm Springs location
- Patagonia – Promote its Worn Wear program
- Book publishing – Promote a new YA book by R.F. Kuang
- Oatly Oat Milk – Barista competition in Los Angeles
- University Tees – Opening of its first brick-and-mortar location
- Warby Parker – Promote children's eye exams in Philadelphia
- Baby Bullet food processor – Host children and parenting information and product fair
- Nike – Partnership with NBA player Giannis Antetokounmpo and youth fitness

### Required Elements – All kits must include:

1. **Strategic-style memo** to the client/boss/instructor explaining the purpose of the kit. Tell what each piece is meant to accomplish, for whom and how that audience is meant to get your information. Length: 1-2 pages.
  - a. Include in your memo a list of *other* items you would include if you were doing a complete kit. This list would include additional written sections, photos or graphics, etc. Include a sentence or two of description as needed. This is where you would demonstrate your grasp of strategy and how you would create a plan that goes beyond the basic requirements of the project.
2. **News release** that announces a "newsworthy" project, partnership or event
3. **Fact sheet** about the organization, partner or event being announced (one page in length)
4. **FAQ or Q&A** that could be published as a printed document or posted on a website. Choose the option that most fits your topic. Must be 8 questions.

### Additional Elements:

Your kit **must** include **two** additional elements. Among your options:

1. **Media pitch letter**. One page in length.
2. **Biography** with **photograph** of a person associated with the subject/campaign. Must have an interesting title. Length: 1-2 pages.
3. **Additional fact sheet**. It must be completely different than #3 in the required elements. Do not have any duplicate information from your required fact sheet (one page in length).

All items must have the “client” logo at the top and be written/saved in Word (.docx) format to allow editing by me.

**PowerPoint, Keynote or Google slide deck** (5 slides only) that you will use to present to the class. The deck should provide contextual information to help your audience (your classmates) understand why you chose this topic, how it relates to the “bigger picture” of world news, and why it is newsworthy. You should plan to speak for 5 minutes.

Slide 1 – client/organization logo and campaign/project title

Slide 2 – news release screen shot

Slide 3 – fact sheet screen shot

Slide 4 – item of your choice

Slide 5 – problems/issues you may have encountered, what you learned in this process (bullet points)

### **Important!**

- Clean copy is a must. Your grade will be lowered if your copy is sloppy.
- Showcase substance. Visuals are an important element, but don't try to hide a lack of substantive copy with overuse of visuals. Visuals should complement the story, not overpower it.
- When I say one page or two pages, they must be FULL pages.
- Documents should be created in MS Word and be 1.50-line spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides.
- All materials must be uploaded to Brightspace **no later than 8:00 a.m.** the day of the presentation. No email submissions allowed.
- Please do not plagiarize. Acceptable: You may borrow basic template language about an organization like the company boilerplate. Unacceptable: You may not copy and paste an interview that exists online and pass it off as your own.

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### **Additional Policies**

The following policies and recommendations are intended to provide guidance to students while also establishing a consistent, campus-wide set of standards for accommodating and responding to some of the common issues that may arise from remote learning.

#### **What You Can Expect From Me**

- I 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 PR.
- I am open to your questions and welcome the opportunity to discuss any issues concerning you. Please let me know what is on your mind.
- When you get an assignment 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.
- 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 given as needed. In addition, we will have in-class writing most weeks.
- I'll guide you along to improve your writing, but you will need 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.

## What I Expect From You

- Our class starts on time. I expect you to be present and ready to engage!
- Assignments are due to me at the designated date/time. All assignments must be complete and typed. Assignments completed not following directions will be graded lower. If you are absent, you are responsible for submitting your homework by the due date/time. **Late assignments are accepted but will receive 50% point deduction.**
- All assignments must have your name at the top. Save all documents in the following format (first name, last name, name of assignment) **example: Susan Smith MacArthur news release or Susan Smith pitch letter**
- There will be no make-ups for the midterm. There will be no extensions for the final project. You must complete and submit the midterm and final project to pass the class.
- If you miss class, please get notes and assignments from the weekly folders on Brightspace. 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 negatively impact your grade as it will distract you and me from our lesson.
- 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 semester to accommodate current events and speaker schedules.
- Please check Brightspace regularly for updates on homework and assignments. And check your USC email account daily, which is how I will communicate with you.

## Annenberg Media Guide to Thoughtful Language:

Check Brightspace for this document (if available) and refer to it as necessary throughout the course.

## Communication

I am always available to speak with students to answer questions, review assignments, or share career advice. Please contact me by email to set up a time to talk via phone or Zoom. I do my best to reply to all emails within 4-6 hours.

## 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, is prohibited. 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 advertising 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](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](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.

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

- The submission of material authored by another person or entity (such as an AI tool – see below) 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, articles 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, articles or assignments that another student submits as their own work.

### **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 or notes section. Students are solely responsible for the quality and the accuracy of their submissions, 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](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### **Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress**

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the Financial Aid Office webpage for undergraduate- and graduate-level SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

### **Support Systems**

USC Annenberg has an embedded student health counselor, Dr. Kelly Greco. Dr. Greco helps students prioritize their mental health and emotional well-being. In this video, she shares a few tips for how to "Fight On" every day. Students may schedule sessions with her through MySHR or by calling (213) 740-9355 (WELL). USC Student Health services are also available to support student's mental health journey by visiting: <https://usc.edu/counseling-mental-health/>

*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](mailto: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**

Lisa Cracchiolo Tush was once sitting where you are now as she was graduated from USC's School of Journalism with an emphasis in public relations in 1984 and worked in Los Angeles for close to 20 years at four global PR agencies: Hill and Knowlton, Burson-Marsteller, Ketchum Public Relations and Ogilvy PR.

Much of her time was spent developing communications elements ranging from media materials to customer newsletters. She worked on numerous accounts including Bridgestone Tires, Epson Computers, Hilton Hotels, Metrolink commuter rail, and Star System ATM network. Additionally, she has experience in media relations and organizing special events.

In 2005 she obtained her teaching credential from Cal State L.A. and transitioned from PR to teaching language arts at the junior high level. She has taught at two LA-area Catholic schools for 10 years focusing on literary analysis and writing instruction.

Lisa volunteers at Cal Poly Pomona where she is an Executive in Residence in the business school. She works with students to prepare them for job interviews. She provides counsel on resumes, letters of recommendation, job selection, and interview skills.

She loves reading, traveling, cooking, exercising, the beach and watching HGTV. Her current favorite podcasts are *Were You Raised by Wolves?*, *My Favorite Murder*, and Southern Living's *Biscuits & Jam*. She is an amateur travel writer and frequent contributor to her friends' blog, Playground-Earth.com.