

COURSE SYLLABUS—SPRING 2008

Mass Communication 383.01—Writing for Public Relations & Advertising (3 Hrs)
MWF, 11-11:50 a.m., Dan Rather Bldg., Room 320

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Office Hours: MWF 9:30-11 a.m., or by appointment between
2:30-3:30 p.m.; TTh 10-11:30 a.m., 2:30-3:30 p.m. or by
appointment.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Doug Newsom & Jim Haynes, *Public Relations Writing: Form and Style, 8th Ed.*

Associated Press Stylebook 2007

A good dictionary

It is your responsibility to obtain course materials at the beginning of the semester. (There are used copies at some bookstores. Shop around for cheaper prices.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the process of communicating to persuade and inform. Students learn the technique of strategic thinking and practice writing for advertising and promotions, news media and special audience materials, such as newsletters and brochures. The growing area of online communications for internal and external audiences will also be explored.

PREQUSITE: MCM 132

CREDIT: 3 hours

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Dedication to accuracy, accuracy, accuracy!
- Gain factual knowledge in the fields of public relations and advertising
- Develop specific skills, competencies and points of view in the fields of public relations and advertising.
- Acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team
- Learn how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems

Building on the beginning Mass Communication writing course, MCM 132, this course gives students specific tools they will need when writing to persuade, and provides hands-on experience in the steps involved in various types of advertising and PR writing. By the end of the class, students should be able to demonstrate a competency in researching and strategizing writing approaches for a variety of ad and PR writing techniques.

This is a combination lecture and lab course, with considerable hands-on writing and critiquing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

GRADING

Course grades will be based on a 500-point scale, which will include quizzes, research, writing projects and a final.

- Quizzes (24%) 120 pts.
There will be four quizzes @ 30 pts. each, based on class discussions and reading assignments
- Research assignment (14%) 75 pts.
One group assignment @ 75 pts. per member of group

- Writing projects (42%) 210 pts.
Six @ 35 pts. each. You will have one late ticket that will allow you to turn in one writing assignment up to one class period late without penalty. After that no late work will be accepted.
- Final (20%) 100 pts.
Show how much you've learned. Ace the final!

Ultimately, letter grades must be assigned to evaluations of course work. Under the definitions established by Sam Houston State University, students who receive the following letter grades are considered to have reached the level of attainment defining that letter. Thus, letter grades received for mass communication courses may be interpreted this way:

A=Excellent B Well above average
C=Average D=Barely passing
F=Failure

Grading throughout the semester, however, is conducted on a point scale. The combined value of all assignments is 500 points. Points are added or subtracted from that according to standards described in this analysis.

500 – 450 pts = A
 449 – 400 pts = B
 399 – 350 pts = C
 349 – 300 pts = D
 < 300 pts = F

ATTENDANCE

A commitment of your time to this course is essential. Regular attendance is expected and will be necessary for successful completion of the course. You are responsible for any assignment made during class in your presence or absence. Save your late ticket for when you are ill or have an emergency. Otherwise, NO late work will be accepted and you will lose the points allotted for that assignment. It will not be possible to make up missed class sessions. Deadline, for class purposes, is the minute the class begins the day work is due, unless otherwise designated.

Do not come late to class. Follow professional procedures as you would at a job. Punctuality is essential; class attendance is expected and will be recorded. After three (3) absences, 5 points will be deducted for each absence; 5 points will be given at the end of the semester to those having no more than one (1) absence. Tardies will also affect your grade, because we will take care of the most important business of the day at the first of every class: discussions of new assignments and critiques of assignments/quizzes being returned. In the world of business, lateness can get you fired, just as absences can.

THERE WILL BE ABSOLUTELY NO DRINKING, EATING OR USING TOBACCO IN CLASS.

Classroom Policies

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Ethical behavior is the cornerstone of responsible journalism. Honesty is expected—and demanded—of all students.

The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Furthermore, the University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to,

cheating on an examination or other academic work that is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

This means students may not copy verbatim (word-for-word) or in part any material from our textbooks, or other written resources (other students' work; library, internet, magazine or other news sources), or written or broadcast materials created by SHSU or any other academic institution.

Students found guilty of dishonest behavior in this class will be asked to leave the class and will be given the grade of "F" for the entire course.

PROPER CLASSROOM DEMEANOR OR CONDUCT

According to the Student Handbook, "Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Please turn off or mute your cellular phone and/or pager before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking among themselves at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a directive to leave class, or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy."

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The students' right to speak on the topics of their choice will be upheld in the class. Choice of topic, values and beliefs will not be judged. Audience members are expected to respect the views of their classmates.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discriminations under any academic, Student Life program or activity. Students with disabilities may request academic assistance when needed from a Committee for Continuing Academic Assistance for Disabled Students by visiting the director of the Counseling Center, located in the annex of the Lee Drain building across the sidewalk from Farrington Building, or call 936-294-1702. Accommodations for disabled students are decided based upon documentation and need on a case-by-case basis by the Counseling Center.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

University policy states that a student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day must take the examination or complete any assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. The student, not later than the 15th calendar day after the first day of the semester, or the 7th calendar day after the first day of a summer session, must notify the instructor of each scheduled class that he/she would be absent for a religious holy day (Faculty Handbook, 1.02-2).

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

BE AWARE OF THE DROP POLICY

A Q-drop is a drop made after the last date for tuition refunds (the 12th class day for fall/spring; the 4th class day for summer sessions), but before the date for which a drop would result in the grade of "F" as published in the Academic Calendar.

Students will be allowed no more than five (5) Q-drops during their academic career at Sam Houston State University. Classes that are dropped prior to the Q-Drop date will not count toward the limit. Students who have used their limit of (5) Q-Drops will need to petition their respective dean to drop a class. If the dean refuses permission to drop a class, a student will be required to remain in the class.

This limit took effect at the start of the fall 2004 semester. Any drops accumulated prior to the fall of 2004 will not be included in the five Q-Drop limit, nor will Q-Drops from other universities.

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THE SAM HOUSTON WRITING CENTER

The writing center provides services to undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff and the community. It is open Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Sunday from 2 until 7 p.m. It is located in Room 111 in the Farrington Building.

Next door to the Writing Center is a Reading Center, available to all. If you find yourself having trouble understanding assignments, visit the Reading Center. Down the hall there is a Math Lab, if you need help with an assignment.

**MCM 383.01 CLASS SCHEDULE
SPRING 2008**

Week 1—January 16-18 What’s the difference between PR and advertising?
ASSIGNMENT: Read Ch. 1 before Jan. 23 class; Ch. 2 before Jan. 25 class
PROJECTS: Write paper on intentions for class; review of sentence structure, punctuation.

HOLIDAY—Jan. 21—MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Week 2—Jan. 23-25
Communication to persuade; Super Bowl advertising
Read Ch. 3: Opinion formation and change
Steps in the persuasive process
Elements of communication
ASSIGNMENT 1: A letter to parents about campus parking problems

Week 3—Jan. 28-30-Feb. 1 Continuation of Week 2; make a list of internal and external publics on a subject to be announced.

Week 4—Feb. 4-6-8 Creativity, PR writer’s ethical & legal responsibilities
Read Chs. 2 & 12: Thinking outside the box, the big idea
Research sources, skepticism and credibility
ASSIGNMENT 2: Creative ideas, “rough” ad campaign for local subject

Week 5—Feb. 11-13-15 Research and the job of the PR writer
Read Chs. 2 (already assigned) & 4 (read before Sept. 19 class): Responsibility & research
QUIZ 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, & 12

Week 6—Feb. 18-20-22 Writing news for print and broadcast media
Read Chs. 9 & 10 (read Ch. 9 before 2/20 class & Ch. 10 before 2/22 class)
ASSIGNMENT 3: Attend simulated press conference, write news release.

Week 7—Feb. 25-27-29 Research team projects
Meet at Newton Gresham Library in the basement, Room 157, on Feb. for session on researching your team’s project—**MANDATORY!!!!!!** **TURN-IN DEADLINE:** Outline for position paper.

Week 8--March 3-5-7 Features for print and broadcast media
RESEARCH CONTINUES---
ASSIGNMENT: Read Ch. 11 before 3/5 class
QUIZ 2: Chs. 9, 10, & 11

March 10-14 --SPRING BREAK

Week 9 --March 17-21 --Completing a research package: fact sheet, outline, position paper & feature. **ASSIGNMENT 4: RESEARCH PROJECT.** In-class presentations.
SUPPLY FACT SHEET TO EACH CLASS MEMBER BEFORE YOUR PRESENTATION. When all presentations have been made, **QUIZ 3: Research techniques and class presentations**

March 21—EASTER HOLIDAY

Week 10 –March 17-19 –Special audience publications

Read Ch. 17 before March 17. Choose a topic on campus and create a 4-page internal newsletter on a campus topic of interest to you.

Week 11 –March 24-26-28 –Complete newsletter DUE: March: 28 at beginning of class

Week 12 –March 31-April 2-4 –Special audience publications

Read Ch. 18 before April 2.

ASSIGNMENT: Create 6-panel brochure to attract visitors to Huntsville.

QUIZ: over Chapters 17 and 18

Week 13 –April 7-9-11 Advertising copywriting

Read Ch. 13 before April 7 class; we will begin preparing for ad assignments before your brochure is DUE on April 9 at beginning of class.

ASSIGNMENT: Develop ad campaign for product or service of your choice as member of a 3-person team. You will grade each other as part of your overall grade. Your final grade will be separate from your team grade.

DUE: April 16

Week 14 –April 14-16-18 Ad copywriting (continued)

Direct response, direct advertising, out-of-home media, sales promotion

ASSIGNMENT: Create ad flyer, billboard, specialty item

DUE: April 23 at beginning of class

Week 15 –April 21-23-25 Copywriting for electronic media PSAs, laws controlling

Broadcast advertising, ads on the WEB. Read Ch. 14.

ASSIGNMENT: Banner, spot and display ads for a website of your choice

Week 16 -- April 28-30-May 2 – QUIZ over Chs. 13 and 14.

Review of writing for and critiquing internet sites. An extra-credit web-page assignment will be available as a make-up.

Review Week—May 5, 7 May 9 is “STUDY DAY.”

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 14, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.