

Course Syllabus, Spring 2016
Journalism 374—Written Communication for Public Relations
Monday and Wednesday, 2-3:50 p.m.

Instructor

Krista Coriaty, Public Relations Consultant
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristacoriaty>
Office Hours: Mon/Wed, 9-11 a.m.

Phone/Text: (562) 413-2237
E-mail: kristacoriaty@gmail.com
Office: LA4-206F

Required Text & Materials

- ***Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques (7th Edition)***
Dennis L. Wilcox
- Associated Press Stylebook
- “PR Daily News Feed” email subscription (free at www.prdaily.com); and/or PRNewsOnline.com

Suggested Reference and Reading

- ***When Words Collide*** by Kessler and McDonald – a great reference for the writing assignments required for this course and others.
- Our class discussions may cover breaking PR news not covered in our textbook. As a journalism/PR student, it's imperative you stay “dialed-in” on what’s making news and why. As such, I recommend you subscribe to at least one major daily newspaper such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *Orange County Register* or the *New York Times*. Online versions are acceptable. Other sources of news discussed in this class might be found on PRWeek.com, PRDaily.com and PRNewsOnline.com.

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the written communications tools used in public relations, as well as increase your writing proficiency. Students will learn the basics of writing news releases, pitch letters, fact sheets, media alerts and other public relations materials, as well as the development of media lists designed to reach diverse target audiences. Writing for social and online media also will be covered, as will using these platforms to help organizations achieve their objectives. A service-learning project will provide real-world PR experience and materials for student portfolios.

Course Objectives and Method of Instruction

Journalism 374 is a demanding skills class and an advanced writing course that requires a significant time commitment. You will be expected to write well and understand the rules of good grammar, punctuation and style. You will be assigned public relations tasks taken from professional situations, as if you were an entry-level member of a PR team. Assignments will be varied and numerous, often with a short deadline, because that’s what you’ll encounter as a public relations professional.

The text will be supplemented by lectures, class discussions, handouts, guest speakers, videos and in-class exercises. Materials and discussions will be designed to give you a basic understanding of the work that you may be required to perform in a public relations position. Class discussions will relate public relations concepts, strategies and tactics to current events, companies and organizations in the news, business issues, media topics, crisis situations, etc. In order to participate, students must maintain awareness about current events by reading newspapers, watching television newscasts, visiting Internet news sites, etc. The activity portion of the class will be devoted to writing, mini-presentations, quizzes and other hands-on activities. Bring the “Associated Press Stylebook” to class for writing exercises.

At the completion of the course, students will:

- Understand the strategic function of key written communications tools used in public relations.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the public relations, including media (Associated Press) style.
- Understand the digital world as it relates to the practice of public relations, including the use of social and online media.
- Apply current public relations tools and technologies, including Cision; Google Insights; Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel; and Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in the U.S. in relation to mass communications.

If you have a disability and need accommodation, please provide verification of your disability from Disabled Student Services and schedule a time with me to discuss the accommodations you need. Typical accommodations for this course include extended time for tests, test proctoring, private test rooms, note taking and referral for tutoring.

A copy of the syllabus, handouts and other course materials will be posted on Beachboard during the semester, along with quizzes and tests. Grades also will be maintained on Beachboard so that you can track your status in the class.

Attendance & Punctuality

Attendance is essential for success in this class. Students are responsible for all materials presented, assignments due, changes to the syllabus and announcements. If you are unable to attend class when an assignment is due, it should be left in the instructor's mailbox in the Journalism office before class begins or given to a classmate to submit. There will be no make-ups for missed in-class assignments or quizzes. **In-class assignments may not be completed outside of the classroom.** Students also are expected to arrive to class on time as a sign of courtesy and respect for your instructor and fellow students.

Make-ups for homework assignments may be granted in strict accordance with CSULB policy, which defines excused absences as (1) illness or injury to the student; (2) death, injury or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like; (3) religious reasons; (4) jury duty or government obligation; (5) CSULB-sanctioned or approved activities. To be considered for an excused absence or a late assignment, type a brief paragraph explaining the situation, staple any supporting documentation to it, and submit it to the instructor by the next class period.

Students are expected to behave maturely, be polite in class, respect one another during class discussions and be courteous audiences during presentations. In addition, students are asked to refrain from distractive behavior such as walking in and out of class and chatting with classmates. Laptop and laboratory computers are to be used for in-class assignments **only**. Cell phones should be off or set on silent. Beverages and snacks are not permitted given the laboratory environment.

Assignments

Your grade will be based on the following:

- Numerous written assignments. The nature of and guidelines for assignments will be given to you in class, and in keeping with professional practices, you will receive many assignments verbally. It is important that you listen carefully, take notes and ask questions to ensure that you fully understand the assignments.

- A brief mini-presentation. Mini-presentations must be given on the day/time assigned; no make-ups will be allowed. If you are scheduled to present, be prepared to start on time by arriving to class early and ensuring your presentation is working. It is expected that you will have practiced your presentation ahead of time and that you use the full allotted time.
- An optional extra credit presentation
- Numerous in-class assignments
- Reading quizzes
- A proofreaders' marks quiz
- A comprehensive AP quiz
- Midterm
- Final
- Service Learning Press Kit (see details below)
- The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication requires that students in upper-division courses place **two articles** in publications considered appropriate by the instructor. A story generated as a result of a news release or pitch letter is preferred (turn in a copy of the release or pitch letter and a tear sheet of the article). Articles in local daily and weekly newspapers are acceptable. Students can also place articles in the student newspaper or campus publications such as the journalism alumni publication or PRSSA newsletter. Articles must be published during the semester. Get started now!
- Additionally, you are expected to have completed assigned reading and participate in class.

Service Learning Requirement

Service learning is an important part of the public relations program at CSULB. Students in advanced public relations courses are required to fulfill a service-learning component that will provide hands-on experience, help them appreciate the meaning of service to the community and provide material for their portfolios. In Journalism 374, a press kit will be developed for a local nonprofit organization or business that is approved by the instructor. The press kit will include items such as a news release, fact sheet, backgrounder, media alert, biography, photo/image & caption.

Begin to locate your nonprofit organization now. To find organizations that interest you, you can look on the following websites, or you can Google "nonprofit and [city]" or "nonprofit and [area of interest]."

Volunteer Match: <http://www.volunteermatch.org/>

Idealist: <http://www.idealists.org/>

Great Nonprofits: <http://greatnonprofits.org/city/long-beach/CA>

Long Beach Nonprofit Partnership: <http://www.lbnp.org/>

The following tips for finding and working successfully with a nonprofit organization have been developed by students before you:

- Don't give up. Keep looking.
- Don't just take the first person who says yes. Do research on the organization to make sure it has news.
- When you meet with the organization, get as much information as you can. Consider recording. They may not provide information on a regular basis, so know the assignments for the semester ahead of time.
- Provide your nonprofit with the assignment schedule. Give them an idea of what is due and when you'll need information.
- Brainstorm with client. You can see what they're thinking so you know what you do is along the lines of what they want.
- Meet with more than one person. Ask to have others invited to the meeting.

- Don't hesitate to follow up but don't be annoying. Sometimes they forget they're supposed to send you information.
- Agree together on focus of press kit and goals. Outline in the beginning.
- Really know what your organization is about.
- Delicately suggest improvements. They love their organization the way it is and don't know what they don't know.
- Keep in touch with organization. Not just for a particular assignment, but on a regular basis to get information. Suggest a regular call.
- Show how what you're doing benefits them. Prove that it works.
- Attend the organization's events. You get ideas and see how they work.
- Remember that it's a nonprofit organization. Few people are doing all the work, and sometimes they aren't getting paid.
- Don't be afraid to take the lead. Smaller organizations are looking for people with new ideas.
- Email at least two weeks in advance of assignments. Don't wait for the last minute.
- Have a third-party reviewer. Clean up writing and ensure understandable.

Submitting Assignments

- Late assignments will not be accepted, unless you have an excused absence as defined by CSULB (see above). If you are unable to attend class when an assignment is due, it should be left in the instructor's mailbox in the Journalism office before class begins or given to a classmate to submit.
- Please **print and staple** your written assignments to turn into me for grading, and also upload them to the corresponding **Dropbox folder on Beachboard** – unless you are instructed otherwise. Failure to do both will result in a reduction in points.
- All assignments are due **at the start of class** on the date specified in the Course Schedule. If you need to use the computer lab's printer, make sure you arrive to class early enough to print and have your assignment ready by 2 p.m.
- Whether completed in class or at home, assignments must be submitted in a professional and organized manner. Present your assignments in a form and manner you'd be proud to give to your future boss or client.
- As strong writing is one of the top skills public relations professionals must possess, papers will be graded rigorously. Your papers should be clear and concise using proper grammar, correct spelling, and appropriate attribution for all sources. All writing is to follow Associated Press style for writing and American Psychological Association (APA) Style for citations. **Please take the time to proofread your papers so you can eliminate spelling, grammar and AP style errors.**

Written assignments will be evaluated in terms of content and grammar/style, with each worth 50 percent. **One point is typically subtracted for each grammatical error.** The criteria are as follows:

Content

- | | |
|--|---|
| • follows directions | • conciseness of writing |
| • well-structured/organized paragraphs | • clarity of message |
| • smooth transitions | • proper word choice |
| • easy-to-read writing | • flair and style (interesting writing, holds reader's attention) |
| • depth of thought | • accomplishes objective |
| • proper development of content | • talks directly to target audience/public |
| • proper language usage | |

Grammar/Style

- Follows AP style and uses proper grammar and punctuation.

Grading Criteria

Grades will be based on points earned from assignments, presentations, quizzes and exams covering lecture materials and reading. **660** points are available.

• Homework Assignments	265
• In-Class Assignments	85
• Presentations	20
• Proofreading Quiz	25
• AP Quiz	25
• Chapter Quizzes	60
• Midterm	50
• Final	50
• Service Learning Press Kit	50
• Participation	10
• Published Articles	20

TOTAL	660
--------------	------------

Since this class is an advanced writing and communications course, you will be expected to write well. Proper grammar, punctuation and spelling are expected on all assignments. If you don't know grammar and punctuation rules and/or continue to violate the rules of good writing, you will have difficulty with this course. Assignments will be evaluated on your ability to take direction, your adherence to the fundamentals and mechanics of writing, content, organization, creativity and relevancy to the selected topic.

To help students track their progress in the class, grades will be posted on BeachBoard. Grade expectations are as follows:

- A** Outstanding Work: Superior writing that is well-organized and effective, with complete facts and correct grammar and style. Additionally, writing that is concise, easy to read, adheres to media style and follows proper format.
- B** Good Work: Writing that is well-organized with complete facts and only minor grammatical and stylistic corrections. This work also follows proper format for the particular assignment.
- C** Average Work: Writing meets minimum requirements of complete and correct facts, but requires editing to correct organization, grammar and style. Some minor problems in format may need correction, and additional work may be needed to heighten the impact of the piece.
- D** Below-Average Work: Writing contains incomplete information, numerous style and grammatical errors, and is poorly organized.
- F** Unacceptable Work: Writing is poorly organized and contains style and grammatical errors, factual mistakes and misspelled proper nouns.

Incompletes are granted only for serious circumstances totally beyond a student's control. Poor class performance isn't an adequate reason for an incomplete. Students must have completed two-thirds of the work with a "C" average.

Red = homework assignment due at beginning of class (printed copy and dropbox)

Blue = quiz or test

Green = in-class assignment

Schedule of Classes**			
Week	Day	In-Class / Topic(s)	Reading / Assignment(s) Due / Presentations
1	Jan. 20	Course Overview & Syllabus Review Presentation Requirement & Choose Presentation Dates/Topics Writing Lab – Your Bio (5 pts)	
2	Jan. 25	AP Style & Proofreading Grammar, Style & Punctuation Review	AP Stylebook – Proofreaders' Marks
	Jan. 27	Review Press Kit & Proofreading Checklist Requirements Writing Lab – Punctuation and AP Style (5 pts)	Presentation 1: Presentation 2:
3	Feb. 1	Preparation for Writing/Research; Email; Public Relations Writing/ Persuasion	Ch. 1, 2 and 14 + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) Proofreaders' Checklist (10 pts)
	Feb. 3	Writing Lab – Email (5 pts) Proofreaders' Marks Quiz (25 pts)	Presentation 3: Presentation 4:
4	Feb. 8	Finding and Making News/ Working with Journalists/Bloggers/ Pitch Letters/Emails	Ch. 3 + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) Ch. 4 + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) Ch. 6 (154-162)
	Feb. 10	Writing Lab – News (5 pts) Writing Lab – Pitch Email (5 pts) AP Style Quiz (25 pts)	Presentation 5: Presentation 6:
5	Feb. 15	News Releases	Ch. 5 + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) Press Kit Proposal (5 pts)
	Feb. 17	Writing Lab – News Release Basics (5 pts)	Presentation 7: Presentation 8: Pitch Email (20 pts)
6	Feb. 22	Fact Sheets & Bios	Ch. 6 (142-146)
	Feb. 24	News Release Peer Edit (5 pts)	Presentation 9: Presentation 10: News Release #1 Draft
7	Feb. 29	Media Advisories Media Kits	Ch. 6 (146-153) + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts)
	March 2	Writing Lab – Media Advisories (5 pts) Writing Lab – Media Kits (5 pts)	Presentation 11: Presentation 12: *Fact Sheet (20 pts) *Biography (20 pts)

8	March 7	Feature Stories	Ch. 7 (165-182) News Release #1 with Peer Edits Attached
	March 9	Midterm Review Writing Lab – Features (5 pts)	Presentation 13: Presentation 14: Media Advisory (20 pts)
9	March 14	Avoiding Legal Hassles	Ch. 11
	March 16	MIDTERM	
10	March 21	Op Eds/Letters to the Editor	Ch. 7 (183-188) + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts)
	March 23	Writing Lab – Op Eds (5 pts) Writing Lab – LTEs (5 pts)	Presentation 15: Presentation 16: *Feature Release (20 pts)
11	March 28 March 30	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
12	April 4	Photos and Graphics Writing for Radio, TV and Online	Ch. 8+ Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) Ch. 9 + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) News Release #2 (20 pts)
	April 6	Writing Lab – Photo Captions (5 pts) Writing Lab – Radio, TV, Online (5 pts)	Presentation 17: Presentation 18: Op Ed (20 pts)
13	April 11	Distributing Media Materials Measuring Success	Ch. 10 & 19 + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) Cision Virtual Lab (5 pts)
	April 13	Writing Lab – MAT Releases (5 pts)	Presentation 19: Presentation 20: *Photo Captions (20 pts) PSAs (20 pts)
14	April 18	JOURNALISM DAY – NO CLASS	
	April 20	Writing for the Web, Social Media Writing Lab – Social Media (5 pts)	Ch. 12 + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) *Non-Profit News Release or Advisory (20 pts)
15	April 25	Newsletters, Brochures and Intranets Speeches and Presentations	Ch. 13 + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) Ch. 15 + Quiz on Beachboard (5 pts) *Media List Progress (5 pts)
	April 27	Writing Lab – Speeches (5 pts)	Social Media Content Calendar (20 pts) (DUE APRIL 29 AT MIDNIGHT)
16	May 2	Final Exam Prep/Course Wrap-Up	
	May 4	Press Kit Presentations	Press Kit (50 pts)
FINAL EXAM Monday, May 9, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. Published articles and supporting documents due			

**Documents that will be included in your final press kit.*

***Please refer to BeachBoard for the most current Class Schedule and course documents.*

Department Information

Advising: If you are a journalism major or minor, the department recommends that you see one of our advisers at least once a year. We have two experienced advisers – Professor Jennifer Fleming (Jennifer.Fleming@csulb.edu) and Professor Danny Paskin (Danny.Paskin@csulb.edu) – to assist you with your course selection, answer questions about requirements, help you stay focused on your chosen path to graduation, and offer other relevant advice. Their information and advising hours are posted around the department and available in the department office (LA4-106).

Internships: The department recommends that you pursue internships, service-learning experiences, and extra-curricular activities to enhance your career preparedness and marketability when you graduate. Employers will expect to see examples of your work; they prefer applicants with experience. Therefore, you will find all internships and job opportunities that come to the department posted on the department's BeachBoard site. A binder with hard copies of all internships is also kept in the department office for your review. In addition, internship postings are available online through the CSULB Career Development Center. Students pursuing opportunities through our BeachBoard or CDC sites should be aware that the department and CDC do not screen these opportunities for JOUR 498 credit. If you are seeking JOUR 498 credit, you must attend one of the mandatory orientations conducted the semester prior to your enrollment in JOUR 498. Students enrolled in a section of JOUR 498 will also receive advance notice of the orientations from their instructor.

Student Media: The department is home to the *Daily 49er* and *Dig Magazine* and closely tied to *KBeach Radio* and *College Beat TV*. Getting involved in student media will help you hone your skills and give you real-life experiences. Stop by the *Daily 49er* and *Dig Magazine* offices in LA4-201 and talk to the staff. Introduce yourself to the faculty advisers – Professor Barbara Kingsley-Wilson (*Daily 49er*, Barbara.Kingsley-Wilson@csulb.edu), Professor Gary Metzker (*Daily 49er* and *Dig Magazine*, Gary.Metzker@csulb.edu), Robin Jones (*Dig Magazine*, Robin.Jones@csulb.edu) and Professor John Shrader (*KBeach Radio* and *College Beat TV*, John.Shrader@csulb.edu) – who can answer any questions you may have.

Bateman Case Study Competition: Consider joining the *Bateman Case Study Competition Team*. The *Bateman Competition* (http://prssa.prsa.org/scholarships_competitions/bateman/) is a prestigious inter-collegiate contest, often called the Super Bowl of collegiate public relations competitions. It is one of the most intense and rewarding experiences for our students. Participants on the *Bateman Team* receive JOUR 485 credit. See Professor Joni Ramirez (Joni.Ramirez@csulb.edu), our *Bateman* coach, for more information.

Student Organizations: The department is home to three active student organizations – the *National Association of Hispanic Journalists*, *Public Relations Student Society of America*, and *Society of Professional Journalists*. Each group has its own leaders and sponsors a variety of activities, including esteemed professionals as guest speakers. These three groups also work closely with the department to co-sponsor special events, such as Journalism and Public Relations Day. Get involved and have a blast with your classmates! Contact the respective faculty advisers for more information: Professor Danny Paskin (Danny.Paskin@csulb.edu) for **NAHJ**, Professor Holly Ferris (Holly@Ferriscomm.com) for **PRSSA**, and Professor Chris Karadjov (Chris.Karadjov@csulb.edu) for **SPJ**.

Social Media: Be sure to get connected to the department's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CSULBJournalism>) and website (<http://www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/journalism/>) for photos and information about department happenings.

Office Hours: Each faculty member holds office hours to help you perform well in your classes, answer any of your questions, and offer advice. Take advantage of office hours and get to know your faculty.

Accreditation: The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at California State University, Long Beach is accredited by the *Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications* (ACEJMC, <https://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/>). Accreditation by ACEJMC is an assurance of quality in professional education in journalism and mass communication. Students in an accredited program can expect to find a challenging curriculum, good facilities, and a competent faculty.

ACEJMC lists 12 **professional values and competencies** that must be part of the education of all journalism, public relations, and mass communication students. Each one of your required courses in the journalism major addresses at least one of the 12 professional competencies. Therefore, graduates who majored in journalism and public relations should be able to do the following:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in the United States, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communication;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communication in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work