PUR 4100: Writing for Public Relations // Syllabus

Section B-54
Spring semester 2017
Thursdays, 9:30-10:45 a.m., AC 2, Room 255 and online

**Professor:** Hugo H. Ottolenghi
**Email:** ottoleng@fiu.edu OR ottfiu@gmail.com
**Office:** none. See department secretary Kate Caylor.
**Phone:** 561-818-2946
**Office Hours:** Before and after class in room 255, and by appointment in person or online

**Course Description**

Introduction to the content, format and style of multiple public relations tools including content for traditional and digital media. You will learn to write clearly and effectively in all areas of communication.

Class participation is not recommended; it is required. Learning to write is an interactive process. Your work will be critiqued in class, and you will critique the work of your colleagues.

**Prerequisites**

PUR 3000, MMC 3104C, and full admission into upper division program.

**Course Objectives**

To provide public relations majors the opportunity to learn news judgment, improve writing ability and understand the basics of media releases, public service announcements, editing and proofreading. Emphasis will be placed on writing for all media and mastering AP Style. There will be exposure to corporate and non-profit advertising, newsletters, media relations, and proper business writing including cover letters, cover memos and e-mail/internet writing, within the context of ethical public relations practice and the advantages of the first amendment.

**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will recognize and use principles and techniques of writing for public relations.
- Students will comprehend issues related to how to reach audiences.
- Students will improve their understanding of how writing integrates with public relations.

**Required Texts, Readings and Equipment:**

1) The 2016 edition of “AP Stylebook” is required. Find it at the bookstore, online, and by online subscription ([http://www.apstylebook.com/?do=product&pid=OLN-917360](http://www.apstylebook.com/?do=product&pid=OLN-917360)).

2) Online readings are listed below. Look for additional assignments in class re-caps.
3) You are required to read daily the New York Times. Free copies are available on the BBC campus and you can access online content free through an FIU subscription program at this Web address: https://myaccount.nytimes.com/verification/edupass

4) Store copies of all assignments on a flash drive and bring it to every class.

5) In-class handouts and other assigned readings.

Assignments

Assignments are judged for content, originality, creativity, accuracy, format, grammar, spelling, punctuation and research. For emailed assignments, create a Word file in 12-point Times Roman font with 1-inch margins.

See schedule for deadlines. Late papers will not be accepted unless your excuse deserves serious consideration. Plagiarism results in an automatic "F" for the assignment.

Attendance Policy

You are required to attend class. The first unexcused absence will reduce your final grade by 1 point. The second will reduce the grade another 2 points. And the third will reduce the grade an additional 3 points, for a total of 6 points.

In certain cases, absences may be excused. It is your responsibility to contact the instructor within one business day of an absence in order to discuss it. It is also your responsibility to get the course notes, handouts or assignments, should you miss class or be late.

Exams

There are Readings across Teachings (RATs) and AP style quizzes. There is no final exam.

Grading

Your final grade in the course will be computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments, with capstone worth 30 percent of category</th>
<th>75 percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readings across Teachings, or RATs</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP quizzes</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing session</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Each absence without a qualified excuse reduces the final grade.</td>
<td>First-1 point; second-2 points; third-3 points</td>
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</table>
The Assignment Grading Scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Exemplary work worthy of commendation from client or supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Work is good enough to be published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Work is good enough to be published and requires minor editing</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>Work requires editing or more research before publishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Work requires significant editing, rewriting and research before publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Work requires extensive editing, rewriting and/or research before publishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>Work not publishable; requires at least one revision for writing and content</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Work not publishable; requires at least two revisions for writing and content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Work not publishable; requires two or more revisions for writing and content</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>61-71</td>
<td>Work does not fulfill professional requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 or less</td>
<td>Work contains spelling error of subject’s name; assignment is missed</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Zero</td>
<td>Work contains plagiarized material</td>
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</table>

The Semester Grading Scale is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-94</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.5-91</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-87.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81-84</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.5-81</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>71-77.4</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>61-71</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>60 or less</td>
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**Computer Use**

It should go without saying that students are expected to treat all hardware and software in the labs with care. Anyone who intentionally damages the equipment will be ejected from the course. Knowingly infecting a computer with a virus, destroying or tampering with programming, duplicating software, snooping through files other than your own can result in university disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

**Academic Honesty**

Florida International University outlines academic misconduct as follows:

*Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.*

**Misconduct includes:** Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as
the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Any student who fails to meet these expectations will not only fail the course, but will also be reported to the Chair of the Department of Journalism & Broadcasting and to the Dean of SJMC.

**Course Outline**

Students should expect a writing assignment every week and to revise it at least once. Class discussion will follow the following schedule, which is subject to change:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS DATE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT DUE</th>
<th>CLASS TOPICS (with readings)</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
<th>RATs and QUIZZES (test period)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Introductory readings</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
<td></td>
<td>RAT 1 on introductory readings (Jan. 9-12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 1: Cover letter and LinkedIn profile (due Jan. 19, letter revision due Feb. 2)</td>
<td>To secure an internship in public relations, write a strong cover letter and engage employers through LinkedIn</td>
<td>AP Quiz 1 (opens Jan. 13, closes Jan. 29)</td>
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<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>Edited press release</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 3: Write a press release with media list (due Feb. 2, revision due Feb. 9)</td>
<td>Writing, distributing and posting press releases is a fundamental part of a PR person's job.</td>
<td>AP Quiz 2 (opens Jan. 27, closes Feb. 2) RAT 3 on social media (Jan. 27 - Feb. 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>Original press release first draft (Cover letter revision)</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 4: Create social media campaign for client. (due Feb. 12, no revisions)</td>
<td>PR firms create and manage FB pages and Twitter accounts. Master the content and engagement rules.</td>
<td>RAT 4 on keywords &amp; SEO (Feb. 3-9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Social media campaign on Facebook, Twitter (original press release revision due Feb. 12)</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 5: Write a Google ad based on keywords. (due Feb. 16, revision due Feb. 26)</td>
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<td>AP Quiz 3 (opens Feb. 10, closes Feb. 16) RAT 5 on web pages (Feb. 10-16)</td>
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<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>Keywords first draft</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 6: Write Web page (due Feb. 23; revision due March 5)</td>
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<td>AP Quiz 4 (opens Feb. 17, closes Feb. 23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Assignment Details</td>
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<td>Feb. 23</td>
<td>(Keywords revision due Feb. 26)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 7: Write feature story (due March 9, revision due April 2)</td>
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<td>RAT 6 on blog posts (Feb. 24 - March 2)</td>
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<td>March 2</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 8: Write a blog post (due March 9, revision due March 26)</td>
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<td>Blog posts are a better way to reach audiences. Send your message with no filters.</td>
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<td>March 9</td>
<td>Feature first draft; blog post first draft</td>
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<td>ASSIGNMENT 9: Content marketing (due March 23, revision due April 2)</td>
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<td>Content marketing is an opportunity for you to be creative with words, images</td>
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<td>March 16</td>
<td>No class, spring break</td>
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<td>March 23</td>
<td>Content marketing first draft (blog post revision due March 26)</td>
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<td>ASSIGNMENT 10: Media alert for Hatsune Festival (due March 30, revision due April 9)</td>
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<td>How do you persuade the news media to show up at your client’s event? By writing an attention-getting alert.</td>
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<td>March 30</td>
<td>Hatsune media alert first draft (Content marketing revision and feature revisions due April 2)</td>
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<td>ASSIGNMENT 11: Story pitch (due April 6, revision due April 16)</td>
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<td>Along with writing press releases, you’ll pitch stories to traditional news media and bloggers.</td>
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<td>March 23</td>
<td>Story pitch first draft (Media alert revision due April 9)</td>
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<td>ASSIGNMENT 12: Crisis management – topic TBA (presentations due April 20)</td>
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<td>Sometimes things go wrong, very wrong. PR people make them right.</td>
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<td>Online</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 13: Wikipedia page edit (due April 20, revision due April 29)</td>
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<td>April 13</td>
<td>(Story pitch revision due April 16)</td>
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<td>ASSIGNMENT 14: Capstone: SunFest (due April 27, no revisions)</td>
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<td>Your client is performing or exhibiting at SunFest. Build campaign.</td>
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<td>April 20</td>
<td>Crisis management; Wikipedia first draft</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Crisis management presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Questions on final assignment</td>
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<td>April 27</td>
<td>Capstone – SunFest (Wikipedia revision due April 29)</td>
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<td>Crisis management presentations</td>
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<td>Extra credit</td>
<td>Critique PSA using rhetorical triangle and create PSA broadcast script, image or ad (due April 20, no revisions)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
READINGS (Links tested in late December)

1) COURSE INTRODUCTION: Read before first class on Jan. 12 / RAT 1 Jan. 9-12

Social media is not the future of public relations – storytelling is.

Why Storytelling Will Be the Biggest Business Skill of the Next 5 Years

The New Look of Public Relations – A Dissenting View

5 Key PR Trends to Watch in 2017
http://www.prnewsonline.com/key-pr-trends-2017

Five Content Marketing Trends to Watch in 2017
http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2016/12/content-marketing-trends-watch/

The Modern News Consumer: 4. Social engagement
http://www.journalism.org/2016/07/07/social-engagement/

The 34 Best Tools for Improving Your Writing Skills
https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/improving-writing-skills-tools

2) COVER LETTER & LINKEDIN: Read before first class – Jan. 12 / RAT 1 Jan. 9-12

Chaplin School guide to getting a job (on Blackboard)

10 Resume Mojo Boosters Most People Miss | LinkedIn

The Online Activity That's Keeping You Unemployed
http://mashable.com/2013/09/16/online-activity-unemployment/

How to Negotiate Your Job Offer - Prof. Deepak Malhotra (Harvard Business School)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=km2Hd_xgo9Q

3) PRESS RELEASES: Read before class on Jan. 19 / RAT 2 Jan. 13-19

12 Tips for Writing Press Releases That Drive Demand

Sample press release
http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/home/sample-press-release/

Effective Press Releases and Distribution Channels
7 tips for writing a killer press release (watch the 1:45 video, too)
http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/7_tips_for_writing_a_killer_press_release_16288.aspx

Tips for writing an effective press release

Media Directories & Media Research
http://libguides.stthomas.edu/content.php?pid=135829&sid=1163689

4) FACEBOOK: Read before class on Feb. 2 / RAT 3 Jan. 27-Feb. 2

Social Media is a Tactic not a Strategy
http://ries.typepad.com/ries_blog/2011/05/social-media-is-a-tactic-not-a-strategy.html

Posts Tagged Mashable eye tracking study
http://www.socialmediamanagement.net/blog/tag/mashable-eye-tracking-study/

Infographic: The Optimal Length for Every Social Media Update and More
https://blog.bufferapp.com/optimal-length-social-media

Research: The Emotions that Make Marketing Campaigns Go Viral
http://blogs.hbr.org/2013/10/research-the-emotions-that-make-marketing-campaigns-go-viral

Top 4 Examples of Effective Social Media Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations

Candidates’ Social Media Outpaces Their Websites and Emails as an Online Campaign News Source

Five great charity social campaigns of 2015

5) TWITTER: Read before class on Feb. 2 / RAT 3 Jan. 27-Feb. 2

6 Creative Ideas for a High Impact Twitter Campaign
http://www.heliosdesign.co.za/blog/web/high-impact-twitter-campaign.html

How to Write a Great Tweet
http://www.alleywatch.com/2014/05/how-to-write-a-great-tweet/

Tips for writing better tweets
http://www.prdaily.com/socialmedia/Articles/Tips_for_writing_better_tweets_15154.aspx

* HCC2103 Twitter Campaign (on Blackboard)

Write a Week’s Worth of Tweets with This Guide to Twitter
http://workreadplay.com/tweets-night/

Twitter reveals insights from best social campaigns of 2015
8 Compelling ways to tell 140 Character Stories on Twitter
http://www.jeffbullas.com/2015/01/24/8-compelling-ways-to-tell-140-character-stories-on-twitter/

5 ways to Write Better Tweets (has live practice tool)
https://www.hallaminternet.com/2015/5-ways-to-write-better-tweets/

The World Cup’s #AskPitbull Twitter Campaign is a Beautiful Failure (good video)
http://www.complex.com/sports/2014/06/world-cup-ask-pitbull-campaign-on-twitter/

6) WRITING FOR INSTAGRAM: Read before class on Feb. 2 / RAT 3 Jan. 27-Feb. 2

5 things to know about writing captions on Instagram
http://blogs.wsj.com/briefly/2015/02/04/5-things-to-know-about-writing-captions-on-instagram/

How to Write Good Instagram Captions: 8 Tips for Perfecting Your Copy
https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/write-good-instagram-caption

10 pro tips for Instagram
http://www.cision.com/us/2015/07/10-pro-tips-for-instagram/

Instagram cheat sheet: 14 tips to master it all
http://www.bitrebels.com/design/instagram-cheat-sheet-14-tips-to-master-it-all-infographic/

7) KEYWORDS & SEO: Read before class on Feb. 9 / RAT 4 Feb. 3-9

23 Actionable Lessons from Eye-Tracking Studies

Public Relations & SEO: A New Skill for New PR Practitioners
http://www.tuhub.net/public-relations-seo-a-new-skill-for-new-pr-practitioners/

Top 15 SEO Content Writing Tips for New Writers

30 SEO Terms Every Non-SEO Should Know
http://www.websitemagazine.com/content/blogs/posts/archive/2015/03/24/30-seo-terms-every-non-seo-should-know.aspx

8) WEB PAGES: Read before class on Feb. 16 / RAT 5 Feb. 10-16

Website content writer
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Website_content_writer

9 Simple Tips for Writing Persuasive Web Content
http://www.enchantingmarketing.com/writing-for-the-web-vs-print/

15 Best Blogs Website Content Writers Should Follow
http://blog.tcdgstudios.com/blog/15-best-blogs-website-content-writers-should-follow

Writing for the web
https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/communications/sites/communications/files/Writing_for_the_Web_w_Notes_2016-06-24.pdf
8 Best Practices for Law Firm Website Content  

Content Creation  
https://digital.uoregon.edu/content-creation

Web Content Writing – 10 Commandments of Quality Content  
http://prominentoffers.com/quality-web-content/

9) FEATURE WRITING: Read before class on Feb. 23

* Feature story structure analysis: DJ Jordan Sanchez profile (on Blackboard)
* Feature story structure analysis: Cuban artist Yuniel Delgado Castillo profile (on Blackboard)
* Feature Story 10 PDF (on Blackboard)
* Feature Overview UIL, from University of Texas University Scholastic League (on Blackboard)

How to Write a Profile Feature Article  
https://www.nytimes.com/learning/students/writing/voices.html

The Secret to Writing Stronger Feature Articles  
http://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/the-secret-to-writing-stronger-feature-articles

10) BLOG POSTS: Read for class on March 2 / RAT 6 Feb. 24 - March 2

The Five Essential Elements of an Influential Blog  

The 20 Most Influential Personal Style Bloggers: 2016 Edition  
http://fashionista.com/2016/03/style-bloggers-2016

Six Straightforward Ways to Structure a Blog Post [With Examples]  

How to Make Your Blog Posts SEO-Friendly [Checklist]  
http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/seo-friendly-blog-post-checklist-h

How to Create a Blog Post in WordPress (video)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX0DMAjtZZg

11) CONTENT MARKETING: Read for class on March 9

Infographics as press releases: 3 beautiful examples  
http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/Infographics_as_press_releases_3_beautiful_example_16145.aspx

5 Infographics to Teach You How to Easily Create Infographics in PowerPoint [+ TEMPLATES]  

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Native Advertising (HBO) – YouTube  
https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=E_F5GxCwizc
Content Marketing Doesn’t Work (read all four pages)
http://www.forbes.com/sites/miketempleman/2015/08/17/content-marketing-doesnt-work/
(NOTE: Copy and paste link into browser.)

10 free tools for creating infographics
http://www.creativebloq.com/infographic/tools-2131971

12) MEDIA ALERTS: Read for class on March 23

How to write a media alert

The Difference Between a Media Alert and a Press Release

13) STORY PITCHES: Read for class on March 30 / RAT 7 March 24-30

Time magazine's editor: How to pitch reporters
http://www.ragan.com/Main/Articles/46264.aspx?goback=.gde_1767127_member_216546972#

How to Pitch: Outreach Tips from Journalists
http://www.buzzstream.com/blog/how-to-pitch-outreach-tips-from-journalists.html

How to Pitch to the Press: The 8 No-Fail Strategies

5 Tips for Pitching Subject Matter Experts to the Media

Eleven ways to craft better HARO and ProfNet pitches
http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/11_ways_to_craft_better_HARO_and_ProfNet_pitches_19130.aspx

How to Pitch Fashion Bloggers (an interview with bloggers)
http://theprcloset.tumblr.com/post/86888432819/pitchingfashionbloggers

How to Write a Pitch and Get Noticed
http://www.successfulblogging.com/how-to-write-a-pitch/

4 Tips for Writing Email Pitches That Reporters Will Read
http://www.mediabistro.com/prnewser/4-tips-for-writing-email-pitches-that-reporters-will-read_b86374

Pitch, Please: Journalists Sound off on Media Relations
http://www.adweek.com/prnewser/pitch-please-journalists-sound-off-on-media-relations-12/117245

14) CRISIS MANAGEMENT: Read for class on April 6

Crisis Communication Plan: A PR Blue Print
http://www.niu.edu/newsplace/crisis.html
Six elements of a crisis communication plan

Video: Assessing Responses to 6 PR Crises from 2016
http://www.prnewsonline.com/video-assessingresponses-to-6-pr-crises-from-2016/

Char Restaurant and Bar Crisis Communication Plan (PDF on Blackboard)
-- Review pages 1-29; read pages 30-37;

14 Tips for Building Your Social Media Crisis Communications Plan
http://www.burrellesluce.com/freshideas/2013/12/14-tips-for-building-your-social-media-crisiscommunications-plan/

15) WIKIPEDIA: Read for class on April 13

How to edit a Wikipedia page (PowerPoint on Blackboard)
Wikipedia: 10 simple rules for editing Wikipedia

Wikimedia: draft best practice guidelines for PR

Wikipedia: conflict of interest (rules for editing pages)

16) CAPSTONE (no readings)

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PSA (extra credit): Read for class on April 6

Preparing Public Service Announcements

Creativity Tips: How to Write a Public Service Announcement (PSA)