



## Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

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**Semester:** Spring

**Year:** 2025

**Course Prefix:** COMM

**Course and Section #:** 3530-X01

**Course Title:** Public Relations and Strategic Communication Writing

**Credits:** 3

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### ***Course Description***

Develops skills in persuasive writing for institutional or individual clients. Provides a hands-on experience in applying public relations and strategic communication writing tools for corporate, non-profit, government, and/or integrated communication organizations. Covers writing for the media, designing and writing corporate literature, and working with the public on behalf of a business, organization, and/or individual as it relates to public relations and strategic communication.

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### ***Course Attributes***

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

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### ***Instructor Information***

**Instructor Name:** Farah Sanders

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### ***Student Learning Outcomes***

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the components of writing as they relate to public relations and strategic communication.
- Utilize professional writing styles, including Associated Press, in a mix of formats as it pertains to public relations practices and strategic communication efforts.
- Construct competently-written documents based on standard public relations and strategic communication practices.
- Develop a written portfolio of work in preparation for employment in public relations and strategic communication professions.

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## ***Course Materials and Texts***

Marsh, C., Guth, D. W., Short, B. P. (2021). Strategic writing: Multimedia writing for public relations, advertising and more (5th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge a Taylor & Francis Group.

Associated Press (2024): Associated press stylebook 2025. New York, NY: Associated Press

### **Laptop or Tablet**

- All students are expected to have access to a computer with a keyboard (not a digital keyboard). This course is intended for completion using a laptop computer, desk top computer, or tablet with attached keyboard. No cell phones are permitted for assignment submissions. If you don't have a computer, laptops and tablets are now available for [checkout from the UVU Fulton Library \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

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## ***Course Requirements***

### **Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy**

Each student enrolled in COMM 3530 will complete the following assignments.

<b>Course Requirements</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes Achieved</b>
<b>Assignments</b>		
Grammar Test	5	1
Areas of Theory Reflection Paper	5	1, 2
Key Messages	10	1, 2, 3, 4
Executive Bio	10	1, 2, 3, 4
Spokesperson Quotes	15	1, 2, 3, 4
News Release	10	1, 2, 3, 4
Organization Backgrounder	10	1, 2, 3, 4
Media Pitch and Media List	20	1, 2, 3, 4
AP Style Skills Game	16	1, 2, 3
Feature Article	15	1, 2, 3, 4
Resume	10	1, 2, 3, 4
Cover Letter	10	1, 2, 3, 4
Final Writing Portfolio	50	2, 3, 4
<b>Quizzed and Exams</b>		
Chapter Quizzes (6 @ 10 points each)	60	1, 2, 3, 4
Video Lesson Quizzes (15 @ 4 points each)	60	1, 2, 3, 4
Exam 1 (Module 1 - 6)	50	1, 2, 3, 4
Exam 2 - Final (Module 7 - 10)	50	1, 2, 3, 4

<b>Discussions</b>		
Discussions (11 @ 6 points each)	66	1, 2, 3, 4
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	286	

The following grading scale will be used in the course:

A = 94%-100%
A- = 90%-93.9%
B+ = 86%-89.9%
B = 83%-85.9%
B- = 80%-82.9%
C+ = 76%-79.9%
C = 74%-75.9%
C- = 70%-73.9%
D+ = 66%-69.9%
D = 63%-65.9%
D- = 60%-62.9%
F = > = 60%

You can determine your percentage (and grade) by totaling the points you have accumulated and dividing those points by the number of points possible, then multiplying that number by 100 for your final grade percentage.

### **Student Time Commitment / Workload:**

- A 3-credit hour class means each student spends 3 hours in the classroom each week.
- Each student spends an additional 6 hours outside the classroom each week completing course-related work.
- Students taking this course will have significant readings and projects, which require them to spend 6 hours each week working outside the classroom.

### **Submission of Assignments**

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Canvas. Unless otherwise indicated on Canvas, most assignments are due on Sundays. Assignments must be submitted on Canvas for grade. Assignments submitted after the due date/time will receive 0 points unless discussed with me before the due date.

### **Exams**

Two exams (50 points each) will be given during the semester. The exams will cover material from the readings, lecture materials, class discussions, and assignments.

The second exam will be the final exam and will be comprehensive. As instructed by the University, the final exam must be taken on the date indicated by the university on the final exam schedule. The exam will be given online in Canvas. Please make any necessary travel, work, etc. arrangements to complete the final on the date/time indicated in the syllabus.

## **Quizzes**

Quizzes will be given online every other week. Quizzes will not be repeated and cannot be made up. Approximately 6 quizzes will be given. The 5-question multiple choice, true/false, and matching quizzes will be corrected and turned in immediately after they are given. Questions will be taken from the readings due for that class module, lesson or materials presented in the previous class periods/modules.

## **Module Discussions**

Each module offers a discussion question that will be posted. The questions will be based on an item from that week's reading, your assignment, or weekly lesson. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the topic, respond to the question, and then respond to at least two other student's response. This means a total of three postings to each discussion board each week. Discussions are a tremendous learning opportunity for you and another chance to sharpen your written communication skills. It is okay to disagree in a discussion. In fact much learning happens when we disagree. However we need to be respectful and keep our online classroom a safe place to learn..

Discussion Topics Include:

AP Style Handout Scavenger Hunt, Writing Clear Instructions, Developing Spokesperson Quotes, Revising a Poorly Written News Release, Writing Copy for an Invitation, Create a Video News Release, Feature Article Ideas, AI Comparison, and Dream PR Job.

## **Submitting Assignments**

All assignments must be submitted electronically online via Canvas. Most assignments are due on Fridays unless otherwise indicated on Canvas. Assignments must be submitted on Canvas for grade. Assignments submitted after the due date/time will receive 0 points unless discussed with instructor before the due date

## **Final Portfolio**

There will be a final writing portfolio assignment that includes all the written assignments from the course with all corrections made from grading comments and submitted in a portfolio format. There will be no late submissions.

## **Technology Fee**

This class has a technology fee. The fee is for the technology used to complete the Media Pitch and Media List assignment portion of the Final Portfolio, this includes development of a media pitch of the

an item of the student's choosing and development of a media list that correlates with the media pitch. Instructors may also use the technology for in-class activities.

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## **Required or Recommended Reading Assignments and Lessons**

All required readings use chapters from the course that align with lectures and assignments.

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### **General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion**

#### Lesson 1 Introduction to Associated Press and Strategic Writing

Text: Strategic Writing

- pp. 9 – 18
- Hand Out: AP Style Guide

- Identify the components of writing as they relate to public relations and incorporate Associated Press style.
- Analyze public relations and strategic communication style writing in all formats as it pertains to public relations practices and Associated Press.
- Create a written approach to understanding Associated Press style writing

#### Lesson 2: Ways Communication Theory in Real Life can be related to public relations and strategic communication writing

- Compare Theories of Media Effects and Message Processing as they relate to media-based strategic writing.
- Evaluate Theories of Audience Characteristics and Response.
- Design written content that uses theories as they apply to strategic writing.

#### Lesson 3: Key Messages and the Law

Text: Strategic Writing

- The Law and Strategic Writing pp. 55 – 58
- Hand Out: How to create Compelling Key Messages

- Analyze key messages and written content for clarity.
- Assess legal applications to public relations and strategic communication writing, including copyright and trademark use of written material.
- Develop written content for clarity and key messages followed by secondary messages.
- Apply understanding of copyright, trademark, and intellectual property to written work.

#### Lesson 4: Executive Bios and Spokesperson Quotes

Handouts:

- Elements of a Great Executive Bio
- How to help your spokesperson's quotes suck less
- 'I'm So Excited' Executives Are in a Tizzy Over Their Announcements

- Distinguish the necessary components and use of associated press in writing an executive biography.
- Discuss the elements of creating a stand-alone quote including associated press attribution.
- Compose and develop competent written public relations documents based on standard public relations practices.
- Evaluate effective use of associated press style in the creation of public relations written documents and statements.

#### Lesson 5: Market Research and Targeting

Text: Strategic Writing

- pp. 94 - 115

Handout:

- How To Write A Press Release That Get's Attention From Reporters
- Outline the purpose of market research and targeting as it pertains to the layout of a strategic news release.
- Evaluate the necessary components of market research to be used in a news release.
- Evaluate the necessary components of a news release that targets a specific audience based on market research.
- Design and develop a news release that incorporates AP style, market research, SEO through keyword optimization, and the inverted pyramid.

#### Lesson 6: Organization Backgrounder, Fact Sheets, and Copy

Text: Strategic Writing

- pp. 135 – 144
- Define the purpose of copy, editing, and accuracy in PRSC writing.
- Demonstrate critical approaches to creating copy by creating accurate content for a social media ad copy, fact sheets, and backgrounder.
- Construct copy for an organization that includes a backgrounder and/or fact sheets.

#### Lesson 7: Digital Newsroom – Media Advisories, Media Kit, Media Pitch and Media List

Text: Strategic Writing

- pp. 115 - 134

Handouts

- How to Make a Stand Out Media Kit
- What I Learned from Receiving 3,751 PR Pitches
- How to Pitch to the Press - The 8 No Fail Strategies
- Define the components of a digital newsroom.
- Illustrate telling and pitching a story in PRSC writing format through video components, use of media monitoring software, and written components.
- Compile a media pitch and a media list that correlate with one another, using PRSC writing techniques.

#### Lesson 8: Feature Articles and Newsletters

Text: Strategic Writing

- pp. 142 - 157
- Define and identify the purpose of nonfiction composition (feature article and newsletter) based writing.
- Identify compelling content for feature articles and newsletters that include necessary material.
- Write and design a mission-driven feature article using creative approaches to inform and entertain the reader, for potential submission to a digital based magazine.
- Create and develop competent written public relations documents based on standard public relations practices.

#### Lesson 9: Social Media/AI/Microblog

Text: Strategic Writing

- pp. 68 - 75
- pp. 169 - 170
- pp. 243 - 244
- pp. 295 - 296
- Investigate the uses of PRSC writing in social media, AI, and microblogging.
- Differentiate the purpose of AI composition, PRSC writing and human-based composition.
- Develop content that demonstrates PRSC writing for microblogging and social media.

#### Lesson 10: Resume and Cover Letter

Text: Strategic Writing

- pp. 311 - 321

Handouts

- Cover Letter
- 6 Secrets to Writing a Great Cover Letter
- Resume
- Identify skills needed within the PRSC field that will support a resume and cover letter.
- Construct a three-paragraph cover letter that correlates skills and work experience with desired future employment.
- Create an experienced-based resume with graphic elements, using action verbs to describe experience and metrics to demonstrate results, incorporating skills learned within PRSC degree program.

Lesson 11: Final Exam and Final Writing Portfolio

The assigned readings for this module are from Lessons 6 – 10 above. Study and review them in preparation for the Final Exam and compiling the Final Writing Portfolio.

- Prepare for final exam by participating in final exam review.
- Construct a Final Writing Portfolio that demonstrates a critical approach to PRSC writing.
- Complete Final PRSC writing exam: comprehensive exam for summative assessment.

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## ***Required Course Syllabus Statements***

### **Generative AI**

**Use of artificial intelligence to construct written material or assist with any and all assignments, discussions, and quizzes/exams is prohibited in this course.** Students must submit their own written work, crafted by them without the use of artificial intelligence software, such as but not limited to Chat GPT. Use of such software for submitted work is considered cheating and falls under the guidelines of cheating and the students rights and responsibility code of UVU.

Examples of use of generative AI tools not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts/responses assigned to you or content that you put into a Teams/Canvas chat.
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.
- Answering Essay questions in an Exam

Any student work submitted using AI tools found to have more than 15% of the student work generated by AI will be addressed and is subject to review in addition to sanctions (see below). If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.

Though intentional vs accidental is often a judgment call for an instructor, it's important to note that accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism—a serious need to address the incident arises regardless. Though the resulting consequences may vary based on the degree of intentionality, any form of plagiarism will be addressed with equal seriousness.

To be clear, copying the exact wording of an AI chatbot is considered plagiarism and means that a student will be held accountable for violating academic integrity. Although many citation guides are

already presenting ways to properly use and cite AI, we do not currently believe that citing AI in your work is in line with the standards of academic writing that value knowing the exact author(s) or sources that informed your writing.

If you are suspected of plagiarism, the first step will always be a conversation with your instructor (in-person or via Teams). If the infraction is very minor or clearly unintentional, there may be no sanctions at all. However, a lowered grade and/or the chance to revise the paper may also be possible. In more serious cases, the assignment may receive an automatic zero.

The most serious infractions may lead to your instructor filing an incident report with the Student Conduct office and with the Communication department chair. Regardless of the chair's decision, the incident report remains a part of your permanent record. The incident may also be reported to the Dean's office for further sanctions and decisions.

We draw your attention to the fact that different classes at Utah Valley University could implement different AI policies, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

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### **Using Remote Testing Software**

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

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## ***Required University Syllabus Statements***

### **Accommodations/Students with Disabilities**

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu) or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at [DHHservices@uvu.edu](mailto:DHHservices@uvu.edu)

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

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### **Academic Integrity**

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions



of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

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### **Equity and Title IX**

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – [TitleIX@uvu.edu](mailto:TitleIX@uvu.edu) – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

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### **Religious Accommodation**

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu). If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.