

COMM 352 – Writing for Public Relations – Spring 2019 - 3 Credits / Instructor: Jay Mindeman

I'm the creative director at a branding / new media agency in Grand Forks. I bring a unique view to COMM theory because I deal with practical, real-life communications situations every day.

Email: jay.mindeman@UND.edu (this is absolutely THE BEST way to contact me)

Required Text: Wilcox, Dennis L. [2016]. *Public Relations Writing And Media* (feel free to rent this online)

Course description: Intensive practice in preparing the most common types of materials used in public relations. Special emphasis on writing style and form, and effective media relations.

The University of North Dakota Communication Department takes scholastic dishonesty and plagiarism very seriously. Read the following information closely and complete the assigned tutorials and corresponding tests if you haven't already.

If you engage in scholastic dishonesty, disciplinary action at both the departmental and university level will be taken, which could result in failing the course and/or expulsion from the university. Examples of scholastic dishonesty include:

Recycling prior work: submitting work previously submitted and evaluated for course credit in prior sections of this course or in other courses.

Cheating: copying from another student's test; possessing or using material during a test not authorized by the person giving the test; collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test without permission from the instructor; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of an unadministered test; substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself to take a test; bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test.

Plagiarism: appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another person's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own work.

Collusion: unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing any academic work offered for credit.

All COMM majors and students taking COMM classes are required to pass a brief online course that teaches them how to recognize plagiarism. This course was put together by Indiana University, which has kindly allowed us to utilize it for our own students. To pass the course, use the links provided below. Obtain the certificate, then upload it to the Assignment in this course entitled Plagiarism Certification by the date indicated on the schedule. If you have already obtained this certificate, you don't need to take the Indiana University course again. Simply upload the certificate that you have already earned for all COMM courses. Finally, if you do not

turn in this certificate by the deadline indicated on the schedule, you will not receive a grade for this course.

Watch the "How to Recognize Plagiarism" tutorials here:

<https://www.indiana.edu/~academy/firstPrinciples/index.html>

and learn about registration / certification tests here:

<https://www.indiana.edu/~academy/firstPrinciples/certificationTests/index.html>

MY OWN COURSE DESCRIPTION: The field of public relations exists in a fascinating place somewhere between journalism and advertising. Unlike journalism, PR has a goal, and it is often financial. Unlike advertising, PR is committed to presenting information in a straightforward manner. A good PR writer understands the difference between these disciplines. A very good professional writer can master them all. In this course, you will hear my take on the topics from the book. While the book includes segments from PR professionals, I will add my own. I will tell you how writing for PR happens in the business world, and then I expect you to put those lessons to work. **Read the book. Watch the lectures. Take notes.** *All information presented in the lectures or the book will be fair game for tests and papers, and any techniques presented in the lecture and book should be applied to your assignments.*

STRUCTURE: This class is primarily split into two parts: lectures about topics and techniques in public relations and writing assignments that discuss those lectures and put those techniques into practice. There will also be two written exams made up of short answer essay questions.

LECTURES: View all lectures via the Tegrity Classes link in their entirety. Each will be roughly 30-45 minutes long. Take notes, anything I say in the lecture may appear on a test and should be considered as you write your assignments. While parts of the book may seem a little out of date, my lectures will be much more current, including additional discussion regarding new media.

ASSIGNMENTS: You will be expected to turn in a writing assignment (no larger than 12 point type, double spaced) regarding most lectures. **See the schedule / calendar for specific dates, times and due dates.** Instructions, etc. will be found under the "Assignments / Exams" link, and will not be available once the due date has passed. Any unexcused late work in this course will result in a grade of zero.

TESTS: There will also be two tests made up entirely of short answer essay questions and writing projects – one midterm and one final. Again, see the calendar for specific dates. They are open book tests and do not require a proctor. These tests will ask you to put the lessons from the course into action (for example, you may be asked to write a news release, social media posts or even a public service announcement).

GRADING: I will expect the same responsibility from you as you will give your boss or clients after you graduate. That means don't miss assignments, do make deadlines. Treat this like a business, and you'll do great.

Grades are calculated like this:

Weekly Writing Assignments: 120 points (12 assignments X 10pts)

Mid-term: 100 points

Final Test: 100 points

Final Grade = Total Points / 3.2

The Communication Department is committed to bringing the richness of cultural diversity to all students. Through active engagement, the Communication Department endeavors to provide multicultural opportunities, to reduce cultural stereotypes, to embrace cultural differences, and to promote respect for cultural diversity. All Students are subject to the University of North Dakota Code of Student Life, including, but not limited to, issues of Scholastic Dishonesty.

To request disability accommodations, please call Disability Services at 777-3425.

All Comm majors and pre-majors will be added to the Comm Program Listserv. The purpose of the listserv is to keep students informed of opportunities to enhance their educational experience at UND. Contact the Communication Program office (und.comm@email.und.edu) if you would like to be removed from the listserv or if you are not receiving messages and would like to be added.

Mission: The mission of the Communication Program is to provide students with a broad understanding of human communication in various contexts, across diverse cultures, and through multiple systems. The program engages students in lifelong learning that addresses socially and globally pressing communication challenges through scholarly, creative, critical, and practical curriculum and instruction.

Goals: We seek to achieve this mission by designing an interdisciplinary curriculum that respects the liberal arts tradition and exposes students to a variety of theoretical and practical experiences to become informed, engaged, and ethical global citizens.

In particular, this course focuses on Goals 1 and 2 of the following:

Goal 1. Students will understand key foundational communication theories and best practices, and will be able to apply these concepts to scholarly and professional scenarios.

Goal 2. Students will become proficient in communicating critically, creatively, and ethically in diverse contexts and through multiple forms of media, including (though not limited to), written, oral, digital, and print-based communication.

Goal 3. Students will learn to conduct and report research in the broader discipline of Communication, including in (depending on courses/emphases taken:) journalism, digital communication, advertising, cultural, organizational, and health communication, public relations, speech communication, broadcasting, and other areas.

Goal 4. Students will demonstrate the knowledge they have acquired in their Communication coursework in an experiential learning environment, providing relevant and meaningful connections between their classroom work and the broader extended community.