

**FALL 2014 Class: JOUR 3420**  
**Public Relations Writing**  
**Location: GAB 111**

3420.002 Tuesday/Thursday from 9:30 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.  
and  
3420.001 Tuesday/Thursday from 12:30 p.m.– 1:50 p.m.

**Description:**

This class is designed to develop students' professional Public Relations research, analysis and writing skills. To become effective Public Relations professionals, students will work and act proactively in response to tight deadlines. Students must complete JOUR 3321 as a prerequisite to this course.

**Instructor:**

Rebecca Noah Poynter  
Adjunct Professor

[rebecca.poynter@unt.edu](mailto:rebecca.poynter@unt.edu) (best way to contact me is Blackboard message.)

Cell: 202-746-3298

**Course Objectives:**

1. Ability to create a variety of public relations documents.
2. Conduct research and critically evaluate information.
3. Understand how to best utilize media for Public Relations communications.
4. Recognize legal and ethical challenges and understand crisis communications response.
5. Use AP style in written assignments.
6. Recognize opportunities to think creatively in designing and writing work products.
7. Apply narrative writing principles to some assignments to tell a story.
8. Work proactively to complete assignments under deadline pressure.
9. Write clear and concise copy.

**Statement of Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
2. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
3. Think critically, creatively and independently.
4. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
5. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

**Office Hours:**

I am available to meet with you before or after class, please let me know prior to the class meeting. I can be reached at [rebecca.poynter@unt.edu](mailto:rebecca.poynter@unt.edu) and through Blackboard M-F from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. I will respond within 24 hours, except on weekends.

**Class Attendance:**

Twice weekly class attendance is required. If you miss more than three times and/or arrive late, this will be considered in your class participation grade. Contact me prior to class if you are not able to attend. For an excused absence, a form of proof is required. There is no make-up or modified due date for any assignment without an excused absence.

**Class Participation:**

**Class:** Class meetings are treated as a weekly business meeting. Students are learning to be Public Relations professionals. Cell phones are to be turned off. Computers located in the classroom may be used only to take notes and/or conduct approved activities. There is no eating or drinking in the classroom.

**Deadlines:** Deadlines are a key component of PR professional development. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due in Blackboard at the time noted and in hard copy at the beginning of class. Late assignments are half credit only, unless there is an excused absence.

There may be additional or modified requirements announced to maintain classroom etiquette, academic standards and the class schedule.

## **Blackboard:**

Class information is communicated using Blackboard, please check regularly. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are to be submitted through Blackboard by the assignment deadline and are due at the beginning of class in hard copy.

## **Reading Assignments:**

Reading assignments should be completed prior to class to prepare for class discussion.

## **Writing Requirements and Citations:**

All written submissions, assignments, discussions and emails will be in standard English using your best grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary and in 12-point Times New Roman. The AP Stylebook is the grammar, punctuation, spelling and usage guide for this class. Please refer to the AP Stylebook and "When Words Collide" for every assignment.

## **Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty:**

Unless otherwise noted, cutting and pasting text from an online or written source without citations (formal or informal) is plagiarism. Assignments which contain plagiarized material will receive a zero. Any assignment or test which demonstrates academic dishonesty will receive a zero. See the **MSOJ Academic Integrity Policy**.

## **Grading:**

90 percent or higher of total possible points: A  
80 percent - lower than 90 percent: B  
70 percent - lower than 80 percent: C  
60 percent - lower than 70 percent: D  
Lower than 60%: F

Exams\*- 20 points

**\*Exams will be taken in-class and mobile devices are not allowed.**

Grammar and AP exam-5

Midterm Exam-10

Final Exam-5

Major Project Assignments-35 points including

Memo/Letter/Email -5

Fact Sheet with design, message and brand components -5

Feature Story with photo and caption -5

Position Paper with design, message, brand and citation components -7.5

Three Media Release Packages (Release, Media List, Pitch, Online Campaign and/or Advisory) -12.5

In-class assignments -30 points including

Media Release/New Story Analysis -5

Crisis Communication Analysis Blog with design components -5

Media Advisory/PSA -5

Q/A, Backgrounder, Talking Points -5

Internet Repackage Work Product with design components -5

Public Service Announcement-5

Class Participation and Professional Presentation: 15 points

Class Participation (attendance and in-class mini assignments) -5

Professional Presentation Packet and Mock PR Interviews -7.5

Intro Assignments including Resume and Self Introduction-2.5

## **Major Project Requirement:**

Approval of a selected nonprofit to conduct major assignments is required. This nonprofit selected may not be one you are or have interned for or used for Journalism 34210 or JOUR 4460. Additional qualifications will be reviewed in class.

## **Textbooks:**

**(Required)** Wilcox, Dennis L., and Bryan H. Reber. *Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston. Pearson, 2013. (Abbr. WR)

(Recommended) Kessler, Lauren and Duncan McDonald. *When Words Collide: A Media Writer's Guide to Grammar and Style*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2012. ( Abbr. KM)

(Recommended) Williams Robin. *The Non-Designers Design Book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press, 2008. (Abbr. RW)

(Recommended) Christian, Darrell, Sally Jacobsen, and David Minthorn, eds. *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. 47<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Associated Press, 2012

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn't require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online. Do not return these textbooks, they will be used again in JOUR 4460.

## **Mayborn School of Journalism Information:**

### **JOURNALISM COURSE REGISTRATION**

- Registration will begin on the dates noted in the schedule of classes each semester. The system is a live, first come/first serve program.
- By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven't taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an advisor.
- A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed the GSP test, all foundational courses, and Math 1680/1681. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.

### **RE-TAKING FAILED JOURNALISM CLASSES**

Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

### **TEXTBOOK POLICY**

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn't require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

### **FIRST CLASS DAY ATTENDANCE**

Journalism instructors reserve the right to drop any student who does not attend the first class day of the semester.

### **ATTENDANCE**

One absence in the course is the limit without penalty toward your final grade, unless you have communicated with me from the beginning about an extraordinary problem. Coming to class late or leaving early may constitute an absence for that day. This is a seminar course, and it requires your attendance and participation each class meeting.

### **FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) UNDERGRADUATES**

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per semester. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose financial aid eligibility.

**If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so has the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility.** Please visit <http://financial.aid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements> for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with your MSOJ academic advisor or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

### ACADEMIC ADVISING

All first-time-in-college students at UNT are required to schedule an appointment with their Academic Advisor and receive an advising code to register for classes both fall and spring semesters of the first year in college. ALL students should meet with their Academic Advisor at least one time per long semester (Fall & Spring). It is important to update your degree plan on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track for a timely graduation.

- It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. **Please check your online schedule daily through the 12<sup>th</sup> class day (January 28) to insure you have not been dropped for non-payment of any amount.** Students unknowingly have been dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, parking fees, etc. MSOJ will not be able to reinstate students for any reason after the 12<sup>th</sup> class day regardless of situation. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

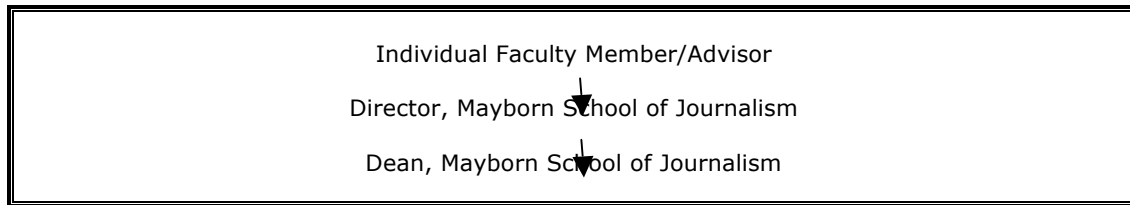
### IMPORTANT FALL 2014 DATES

August 25	First Class Day.
September 8	Census.
September 9	Beginning this date a student who wishes to drop a course must first receive written consent of the instructor.
October 3	Last Day for student to receive automatic grade of W for nonattendance. Last day for change in pass/no pass status. Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the semester with a grade of W for courses that the student is not passing. After this date, a grade of WF may be recorded.
October 4	Beginning this date instructors may drop students with a grade of WF for nonattendance.
November 3	Last day to drop with either W or WF. Last day for a student to drop a course with consent of the instructor.
November 10	Beginning this date, a student who qualifies may request an Incomplete, with a grade of I
November 21	Last day to withdraw (drop all classes). Last day for an instructor to drop a student with a grade of WF for nonattendance.
December 5	Reading Day (no classes).
December 6-12	Final Exams.
December 12	Last Class Day.

For other important dates please visit <http://registrar.unt.edu/registration/summer-registration-guide>.

### ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the step outlined below:



### OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of North Texas and the Mayborn School of Journalism make reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

### COURSE SAFETY STATEMENTS

Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use property safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medial attention at the UNT Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or exams; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, the acquisition of tests or other material belonging to a faculty member, dual submission of a paper or project, resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructors, or any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. Plagiarism includes the paraphrase or direct quotation of published or unpublished works *without* full and clear acknowledgment of the author/source. Academic dishonesty will bring about disciplinary action which may include expulsion from the university. This is explained in the UNT Student Handbook

If student plagiarize by copying any text from websites or publications (including online) of any kind without giving credit for an assignment then the grade for the assignment will be a 0.

### MSOJ ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school's policy aligns with UNT Policy 18.1.16 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student

may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

#### **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student\\_conduct/index.html](http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html).

The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

#### **STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS (SETE)**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available at the end of the semester to provide students a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course.

#### **FINAL EXAM POLICY**

Final exams will be administered at the designated times during the final week of each long semester and during the specified day of each summer term. Please check the course calendar early in the semester to avoid any schedule conflicts.

#### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the my.unt.edu site [www.my.unt.edu](http://www.my.unt.edu). If you do not regularly check EagleConnect or link it to your favorite e-mail account, please so do, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. The website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward your email: <http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/>

#### **COURSES IN A BOX**

Any MSOJ equivalent course from another university must receive prior approval from the MSOJ academic advisor to insure that all MSOJ degree plan requirements are met. For example, courses that are taken online or from a program that offers course material via CD, booklet, or other manner of correspondence must have prior advisor approval.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR F-1 STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES**

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in multiple on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

- (1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
- (2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Advising Office. The UNT International Advising Office has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

**Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, students should contact the UNT International Advising Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email [international@unt.edu](mailto:international@unt.edu)) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.**

#### **DROPPING AN ONLINE COURSE**

A student needing to drop an online course should send their instructor an email with their name, student ID#, reason for dropping a course, and date you are sending the email. This *must be done prior to the UNT deadline to drop a course.*

If approved, the instructor will contact the MSOJ Undergraduate Office in GAB 102 where you may obtain a signed drop form. **It is your responsibility to turn in the completed drop slip to the UNT Registrar's office before the deadline to make sure you have been dropped from the course with a "W".** If you are taking only online courses and your instructor approves the drop, please contact the MSOJ Director of Advising for instructions.

### **EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at [www.my.unt.edu](http://www.my.unt.edu). Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

### Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, UNT Journalism

Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism (Mayborn School of Journalism effective September 1, 2009) has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited professional master's program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course, JOUR 3420 will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have been checked by your professor, Rebecca Poynter ( see page one) . Each graduate must:

- 🍎 Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practice.
- 🍎 Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- 🍎 Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
- 🍎 Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- 🍎 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.

