

**Message Design and Influence**  
**Fall Semester 2018, Comm 310**  
**MW 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm**  
**103 RSS**

**Course Syllabus**

Instructor: Barry Waldman  
Office Hours: After class and by appointment  
Phone: 843-860-4845  
Email: [waldmanb@cofc.edu](mailto:waldmanb@cofc.edu)

**Objectives and Course Description:**

This is a writing course. We will talk about good and bad writing, read good and bad writing, critique good and bad writing, and most importantly, do a lot of writing.

It's also a PR course. We'll review and practice various PR tools.

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the target audience for a specific message.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in background research and analysis.
3. Design an appropriate and specific message for that audience.
4. Demonstrate ability to integrate and apply knowledge and skills from prerequisite course(s).
5. Demonstrate proficiency in editing and design of the visual elements of the message.
6. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and revise the visual and textual elements of their message.

**Course Text:**

Highly Recommended: Associated Press Stylebook -- a must-have for professional communicators ISBN 0-465-00488

**Course Methodology:**

Well-written, targeted, strategic messages are fundamental to successful public relations. This class will mix lectures, guest speakers, exercises, student presentations, instructor rants and classroom discussion to help you improve your

writing and expand your understanding of PR objectives and the tools appropriate to achieving them. Heavy emphasis will be on “real world” applications of the material covered in the text and discussed in class.

### **Student Assignments:**

There will be regular quizzes based on class discussion, grammar and news; and weekly writing assignments based on class lessons.

### **Assignment Value**

Quizzes.....20%  
Papers .....75%  
Class Participation...5%

### **Grade Scale**

A 92-100	A- 90-91.9	
B+ 88-89.9	B 82-87.9	B- 80-81.9
C+ 78-79.9	C 72-77.9	C- 70-71.9
D+ 68-69.9	D 62-67.9	D- 60-61.9
F < 60 points		

### **Meeting Deadlines:**

All assignments are due at the beginning of class, uploaded to

Oaks in a Word or text document. (No pdfs, please.) **Students who miss class are still responsible for completing the assignment on-time** except by prior arrangement. Any paper submitted after 5:30 p.m. is late.

Any assignment submitted after the deadline is subject to the following late penalties:

- Before midnight the night it's due -- 10 points (on a 100-point scale).
- Before the next class day – 15 points.
- A week later – 20 points.
- Later than that -- 30 points.

*No student will be allowed to submit more than one*

## *late assignment per semester.*

### **Plagiarism:**

It is expected at all times that all work turned in by the student is the result of his or her own efforts. The *minimum penalty* for cheating required by College of Charleston is a failing grade in the course.

### **Food/Drinks:**

Students may eat and drink in class, as long as they clean up afterwards and avoid creating a disturbance.

### **Electronic Devices**

Please do not use the computer unless so directed by the instructor.

### **Cell Phones & Computers**

Off. That's the opposite of on. And while you're at it, turn the phone off while you drive, to avoid getting yourself or someone else killed.

**SNAP Accommodations:** If you are approved for SNAP, please provide me with documentation at the start of the semester so I can accommodate your needs.

### **Writing Lab**

If you're having difficulties with the assignments, I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, please call 843.953.5635 or visit <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>.

**Preliminary Class Schedule Outline:** (subject to change)

Week 1 -- Introduction, Overview  
Week 2 --Aligning customers, messages; communication theories  
Week 3 -- Resume, cover letter  
Week 4 -- Journalism style of writing  
Week 5 -- News media/Media alerts & fact sheets  
Week 6 -- News releases -- inverted pyramid  
Week 7 -- Writing great news releases/ (media representatives)  
Week 8 -- Columbus Day/ Great News releases  
Week 9 -- Feature writing/ Feature writing  
Week 10 -- Writing for broadcast/(PR pros)  
Week 11 -- Writing for Video/ Thanksgiving  
Week 12 -- Writing for video/Writing for audio  
Week 13 -- Website review/ TBD  
Week 14 -- Social media/Thanksgiving  
Week 15 -- Writing e-newsletters/Wrap up and goodbye