English 409

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Course Objectives

1) a theoretical perspective for understanding the reader/writing relationship as it pertains to professional writing, including

2) an understanding of rhetorical theory, social semiotics, and genre theory

3) an appreciation of the social contexts within which documents are produced

4) practical professional skills, such as the ability to conduct focused research and to revise and edit brochures, news releases etc.

5) the ability to function effectively as a member of a research and writing team

Course Organization

This course consists of a series of lectures, discussions, in-class workshops, and out-of-class workshops. For the first module (weeks 1-6) all students attend the module on Public Relations: Principles and Practices. After Reading Week students may choose either Forms of Popular Fiction taught by Prof. Schryer or Business Presentations taught by Prof. Randall. Each of the three modules has its own assignments and course outline.

Course Policies

(1) Each 3 hour class in 409 - and remember there are two of these each week -- is equivalent to a week's lectures in a regular credit course. Therefore, attendance in the lectures, in-class discussion/workshops, and the out-of-class workshops is mandatory. Group work depends on your contribution: students must inform their group if they cannot attend a meeting, and any student who misses more than one such meeting will need to explain his or her absence to the instructor. Group assignments will include participation marks based on instructor and peer evaluation.

(2) All assignments must be typed.

(3) All assignments must be submitted on time. Late papers will be penalized--5% for every day late.
Public Relations: Principles and Practices (Module 1)

Module Objectives: This unit aims to introduce students to some of the theoretical work and practices used by current Public Relations practitioners.

Module Policy: Some of the work in this unit will be directed towards a specific "client." It is the instructors' policy that any work done by students in the course for that "client" remains the property of the students.


Assignments: Case Report (25%)  
Press Release (15%)  
Project (30%)  
Case Report on project (30%)

Case Report (individual): In 1500 words provide a case analysis of one of the cases in Public Relations Practices. Your analysis must also include references to some of the sources provided in each chapter. A case in Public Relations literature normally consists of the following elements:

1. Research: To describe the nature of the problem and its background—the evolution and probable causes. To define the objectives involved in the solution. To consider other possible solutions and their consequences.

2. Publics: To determine how priority publics were selected and how each was involved in the solution.

3. Action: To examine the tools and techniques used in terms of their effectiveness with the various publics. To look for evidence of management and public's endorsement through continuation of the program or through other results that give give evidence of a solution.

4. Evaluation: To recommend better ways to approach similar problems, should these occur in the same organization. To analyze lessons to be learned from the solution implemented.

* This description of a case analysis is derived from Newsome, Turk and Kruckenberg This is PR: The Realities of Public Relations. Wadsworth, 1996. (p.487)

Press Release (individual): Write a 2-3 page press release for the KW Record or a campus paper as if you were a member of the Public
Relations team at the University of Waterloo. Your release will be based on what you learn from a speaker brought to class, and is due the following class.

**Project (group):** This group project offers you the opportunity to work with a public relations practitioner in order to develop prototype material required either for a technology company or for an advocacy group. This assignment requires that you research the needs of your organization and its publics, and design a prototype document to satisfy that need. Your finished product should consist of a prototype document and a short 2 page report addressed to your client explaining how the document satisfies the needs of the organization and its publics.

**Case Report on Project (individual or group):** In 1500 - 2000 words provide a case analysis of your project. Your analysis should consist of the following elements.

1. Research: To help identify the problem and establish objectives

2. Publics: To designate publics and recognize which are target publics. To learn what they know and believe and how to reach them with the available media.

3. Action: To plan ways of reaching publics in an effective, efficient manner with a flexible, feasible timetable. To develop a persuasive strategy.

4. Evaluation: To hypothesize about the results of the document as revealed by post-testing research or less formal methods such as responses from publics and staffs.

**Weekly Schedule 409**

**Week 1**

Jan 7: Overview of 409; introduction to the modules; overview of public relations (history, glossary, theory, ethics, employment); overview of popular fiction; overview of business presentations

Jan 9: (Chpt 1-2) Theories of public relations and case analysis; workshop

**Week 2: Research and Practices**

Jan 14: Research skills and techniques for PR practice

Jan 16: Workshop on research and techniques - prepare for Jan 21 visit
Week 3: Consumer and Community Relations

Jan 21: Speaker for main project

Jan 23: Organization of main project

Jan 24: Case report due

Week 4: Media Relations

Jan 28: Press releases (strategies, techniques, analysis, examples)

Jan 30: Press releases (speaker)

Week 5: Planning and Analysis

Feb 4: Planning and analysis workshop (Press release due)

Feb 6: Prototype draft presentations

Week 6: Issues and Products

Feb 11: Ethics, values, standards

Feb 13: Final presentations (Project due)

Feb 28: Case Report on Project due

Reading Week