

July 2–Aug. 15 | M/W 9–11:30 p.m. | Dunbar 4207

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Course Description

Public relations is a very rewarding profession that involves creativity, strategic planning, writing, interpersonal communication, group communication, public speaking skills, and networking skills. Contrary to popular belief, however, public relations is not just a profession for people who like to talk. The best public relations practitioners never appear in front of cameras defending their organizations. The best public relations practitioners *counsel* their organizations about how to avoid crises and behave ethically so that potentially damaging situations never even occur.

Modern public relations is based on communication theory, research skills, principles of scientific persuasion, knowledge of business and marketing, desktop publishing skills, models of past practice, and writing skills. Although you will not learn everything this semester, you will learn the basics of public relations writing and theory.

Objectives

- To learn about the history of the profession and the direction the field is heading.
- To learn about the basic theories and assumptions guiding public relations.
- To learn about the RACE formula and other useful heuristics.
- To learn the importance of research in public relations.
- To learn about persuasion theory and the importance of persuasion in message production.
- To learn about the role of new communication technologies in public relations.
- To learn about Associated Press style.
- To teach students how to write news releases, pitch letters, & other documents.
- To teach students about portfolio development.
- To teach students the basics of message design and how to create more compelling documents.

Miscellaneous

- ***Come up with a method to help me remember your name.***
- All readings and reading questions are due on the date indicated.
- Missed exams cannot be made up for any reason.
- Exams may only be taken early with prior permission.
- *Having even one spelling error will result in a zero for an assignment.*
- Late assignments will be discounted 10% per *calendar day*.
- If you do not have an assignment ready to turn in, don't skip class. Come to class anyway. There is no value in skipping class.
- Come see me in office hours with questions or for feedback before assignments are due. Office hours are there for you; you pay for them so use them.
- Familiarize yourself with Associated Press (AP) style and follow it for all assignments.

Required Texts

Diggs-Brown, B. (2006). *The pr styleguide: Formats for public relations practice (2nd edition)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning. ISBN: 0495006432.

Goldstein, N. (Ed.) (2006). *The Associated Press stylebook and libel manual and briefing on media law with internet guide and glossary*. New York: Associated Press. ISBN: 0917360508.

Heath, R., & Coombs, W. T. (2006). *Today's Public Relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 1412926351.

Class Policies

Formatting and Writing Expectations

Public relations is characterized by effective writing. As a result, professional writing standards are expected on all assignments. Professional standards include: correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and careful proofreading. No spelling errors are allowed. *Having even one spelling error will result in a zero for the assignment*. Except when otherwise noted, all assignments should be double-spaced (27 lines-per-page), have one-inch margins all around, and be written in Bookman or Bookman Old Style 11 pt. **Never use** Arial, Helvetica, Times or Times New Roman, for any assignment in my class. I will not accept it and your assignment will be late when I send you back to fix it.

Attendance Policy

Western Michigan's attendance policy reads as follows: "Students are responsible directly to their instructors for class and laboratory attendance, and for petitions to excuse absences" (Catalog, 2003–2005, p. 29). In the business world, attendance is an important aspect of professionalism. Indeed, "just showing up" is sometimes the most important aspect of job performance and can mean the difference between a promotion or a layoff. Additionally, attribution theory tells us that even the best employees/professors/students in the world will be perceived as slackers if they do not come to work/class. Getting all As on tests/assignments is necessary but not sufficient. Attendance is also a required aspect of my class just like doing the reading and taking tests.

Attendance Policy (Summer): You may miss one class without penalty. If you miss a second class, your final grade will be reduced by 10%. *Missing a third class will result in a failing grade for the course. There are no excused absences.* Being sick, in an automobile accident, going on a job interview, attending a conference, getting arrested, etc., will not be excused. *Coming late or leaving early 3 times equals an absence.*

NB: If you plan to miss a day because of a religious holiday, you need to tell me early in the semester what day you will miss. The day *before* a religious holiday is unacceptable. All religions know the dates of religious holidays several months in advance.

The only other activity that I will excuse besides religious holidays is jury duty, and only if you are on a jury—you report for jury duty early and are assigned or excused in plenty of time to make my class. In Michigan, you call or check online whether you have jury duty around 5 p.m. the day *before*.

For all other reasons that you might miss class, be sure that you have not used your allotted absences so that you can afford to miss a class with no penalty when you need one.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or inappropriate use of the words or ideas of others. Plagiarism occurs when written or spoken material is borrowed (even from oneself), in whole or in part, and passed off as original by a writer or speaker. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, presenting someone else's ideas, speech, presentation, essay, book review, or news release as original. Plagiarism also includes failing to document or cite the source of word-for-word

or paraphrased material in oral presentations or written assignments. *It is my policy to pursue plagiarism vigorously, to fail students who plagiarize for the entire class, and to report cases of plagiarism to the university administration.*

The University is an academic community of scholars. Academic dishonesty is a very serious offense against the integrity of this community and will not be tolerated. All academic work submitted by you is assumed to be your own *original work* and to contain your own thought, research, and self-expression. Work that borrows the ideas, organization, or wording, from others must be properly acknowledged. Similarly, work that was conducted for another class should not be passed off as original.

Additionally, anytime a student or professional attempts to deceive another by pretending to do work, or take credit for work that s/he did not actually complete, including changing the font size or style, triple spacing, claiming to have submitted an assignment on time that the professor must have “lost” etc., s/he is engaging in academic dishonesty or “cheating.” What you are attempting to do is no different from copying from someone else’s test. The consequences of this will be just as serious as plagiarism.

NB: Many students are caught each semester and failed for plagiarism. If even one student in one hundred cheats, the number is too high. In a typical semester, several dozen students are caught cheating at WMU. For students planning to graduate, plagiarizing an assignment is quite possibly the stupidest thing they could do. Do not engage in plagiarism in any form. If you are ever unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, ask me or someone else in the department. At the very least, send an e-mail out to me at two in the morning with your question to CYA and explain what you will do to try to be accurate with your citations. When you enter the business world, plagiarism will not only get you fired, but also may ruin your career and land you in jail depending upon what ideas/content you steal.

There is a very simple rule to follow in order to avoid plagiarism and never get in trouble.

Cite everything that is not your own words or idea. If you know that someone else said it, wrote it, or thought it, anywhere, even someone at a party, cite the source. Do this and you will never get in trouble for plagiarism.

Calculating Grades

To calculate your overall grade throughout the semester, you simply multiply the points you earned on a particular assignment by the points the assignment was worth, add all of the points up for each assignment, and then divide by the total. For example, say you received 75% on your presentation, which is worth 10% of the course total, so you earned 7.5 points ($.75 \times 10 = 7.5$). Similarly, if you received an 85% on your first exam, worth 15% of the total, you have 12.75 more points ($.85 \times 15 = 12.75$). Finally, if you earned a 90% on a research paper you’d have 18 more points ($.90 \times 20 = 18$). Add all of the points that you have earned and divide by the possible points for the assignments completed ($(7.5 + 12.5 + 18 = 38.25) / 45 = 85\%$) to find your overall grade. Here are several samples of how to calculate your current grade:

80% (10 pts.) $.80 \times 10 =$ 8.0 pts	83% (10 pts.) $.83 \times 10 =$ 8.3 pts	86% (10 pts.) $.86 \times 10 =$ 8.6 pts
85% (15 pts.) $.85 \times 15 =$ 12.75 pts	65% (15 pts.) $.84 \times 15 =$ 9.75 pts	88% (15 pts.) $.88 \times 15 =$ 13.2 pts
88% (20 pts.) $.88 \times 20 =$ 17.6 pts	80% (20 pts.) $.80 \times 20 =$ 16.0 pts	95% (20 pts.) $.95 \times 20 =$ 19.0 pts
<hr/> $(8 + 12.75 + 17.6 = 38.35) / 45 =$ 85.2%	<hr/> $(8.3 + 9.75 + 16 = 34.05) / 45 =$ 75.7%	<hr/> $(8.6 + 13.2 + 19 = 40.8) / 45 =$ 91.7%

Grading Scale

A	93–100	BA	87–92	CB	77–82	DC	67–72		
		B	83–86	C	73–76	D	60–66	F/E	0–59

Assignments

Assignments	Points
Reading Questions/Quizzes: (prepare a list of questions, for all class readings, 10 x 2%)	† 20%
List of A.P. definitions: (create definitions list of all AP terms from the handout)	5%
Exam I: (AP terms. Be able to describe all rules and use in public relations examples)	10%
Exam II: (Multiple choice, T/F, identification, short answer, essay format, etc.)	15%
Exam II: (Multiple choice, T/F, identification, short answer, essay format, etc.)	15%
Public Relations Documents	
RSS Monitoring: (two one page memos; also the basis for text questions, 2 x 5%)	10%
News Release: (5+ ¶s, details to be provided)	10%
Fact sheet: (400+ words, 1–2 pp., creative layout)	10%
Portfolio: (Submitted in three-ring binder w/ page protectors & resume [As per <i>my</i> handouts, <i>not</i> what you made for someone else's class, details to be provided])	5%
Total	100%

† For each class' readings, you must prepare a list of several discussion questions. You should have a minimum of 25 lines worth of questions—not counting your header information and citation. Format your questions like the sample provided. I am not looking for “test” questions that you know the answer to, nor am I looking for “what are the three features of X?” questions. If the answer is in the chapter/article, then it is not something for which you have a question. Pose questions about issues that interest you or for which you want clarification. For example, “I am unclear of the role played by women in public relations management positions . . .” or, “The author argues that intercultural issues are becoming more important, but what about if I do not want to work for a multinational organization?” or, “How important is it to understand how new technology like Web sites is being used . . .?” Questions submitted late will receive partial credit. *All questions must be submitted within one week of their due date to receive any credit at all.* I will also give a few quizzes throughout the semester that will get factored into this point total.



Communication 350: Introduction to Public Relations

Tentative Course Calendar

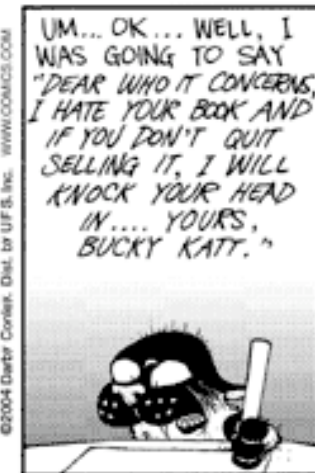
Date	Day	Activity/Reading	Assignment Due
July 2	1	Read: Heath & Coombs, Chapter 1, Overview.	Begin Studying AP Terms
		Read: Heath & Coombs, Chapter 2, History of Public Relationships.	
July 4	2	Independence Day	
July 9	3	Read: Heath & Coombs, Chapter 3, managing relationships Read: Read about News Releases in Kent (.../~mkent/com350/), Chapter 7; Read NR handouts, online (~mkent/documents.html); Read Diggs-Brown on writing news releases News Release Assignment.	
July 11	4	Read: Kent (.../~mkent/com350/), Chapter 4, Theories.....	AP Definitions List Due News Release Draft I (bring 3 copies to class)
July 16	5	Read: Heath & Coombs, Ch. 4, Research	Exam I (AP, Theories)
		Read: Kent (~mkent/Index.html), "Conducting Better... "	
July 18	6	Read: Heath & Coombs, Chapter 5, Planning.....	News Release Draft II Due
		Read: Heath & Coombs, Chapter 6, Strategic Messaging Portfolios.	
July 23	7	∞ Writing Activity: Fact Sheets	First RSS Memo Due
		Read: Heath & Coombs, Chapter 7, Evaluation.	
July 25	8	Read: Heath & Coombs, Chapter 8, Theory.....	News Release Draft III Due Exam II (chapters 1-8, lecture, NR)
July 30	9	∞ Writing Activity: TBA.....	Fact Sheet Draft I Due (bring 3 copies to class)
		Read: Heath & C., Chapter 9, Ethics.	
Aug. 1†	10	∞ Writing Activity ∞: Pitching—Letters of Application	Fact Sheet Draft II Due
		Read: Heath & C., Ch. 10, Env. Scanning	
Aug. 6	11	∞ Writing Activity: Writing a Memo	
		Read: Heath & C., Chapter 11, Media/Tech.	
Aug. 8††	12	Guest Lecturer TBA (I will be at AEJMC). ∞ Writing Activity: TBA	
Aug. 13	13	Read: Heath & Coombs, Chapter 12, Promotion.....	Fact Sheet Draft III Due
		Read: Heath & C., Chapter 13, Collaborative Decision Making	
Aug. 15	14	Read: Heath & C., Ch. 14, Building a Career, & 15, The Future...	Second RSS Memo Due Exam III (Ch.s 9-15), Portfolios w. Resumes, Written Doc. etc. Due

† X/C 1: Due, August 1: Prepare a one-page (single-spaced), 400-500 word, fact sheet on a contemporary public relations scholar. Include a picture. Make copies for everyone in the class and distribute. You must get permission from me ahead of time regarding whom to use (0-5%).

†† X/C 2: Due, August 8: Write a two to three page (single-spaced) memo (in memo form) reporting on your academic progress—assume I am the one paying your tuition and to continue you need to give me periodic updates. Be thorough and compelling. For full credit, you need to convince me my money is well spent. Do not pander or heap false praise (0-5%).

The following items are worth 1% each provided they are "complete," up-to-date, etc.: Media/information kits, annual reports (good ones), fact sheets (good ones), professional newsletters (not school related), training videos.

∞ **NB: "Writing Activities" will take place in the Mac Computer Lab in 4210 Dunbar.**



RSS Monitoring Assignment

Learning how to use RSS and monitor news with “aggregators” is not new in terms of the Internet where the world moves in dog years. Let us just say that RSS is “mature.” As students, however, most of you have probably never had to learn how to subscribe to an RSS feed.

Aggregators typically bring in what are called RSS (“Really Simple Syndication”) feeds. RSS uses a programming language called XML (similar to HTML) to convert Web content into an easily shared format. You probably have visited hundreds of Web sites that have RSS feeds and never knew it. For example, next time you are using the Internet, take a look at the address bar, or sometimes the top or bottom of the Web page you are visiting, and you will see a small red or blue box with the letters “RSS” inside it.

The default choices on many aggregators allow users to select from among several dozen to several thousand popular feeds: *BBC*, *BoingBoing*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *CNN*, *NASA*, *New York Times*, *Salon*, *Slashdot*, *Wired*. Additional feeds not listed for Blogs or sites offering RSS feeds may be manually added. Your typical aggregator works just like most e-mail programs. The principle of RSS is a lot like a personalized newspaper that leaves out the sections that you do not like.

Using an RSS aggregator allows public relations professionals to quickly sort through information from many media sites, organizations, and Bloggers, essentially giving professionals the ability to monitor what is said by a number of sources as well as by individuals and publics the second that they post it. Learning how to use an aggregator is part of learning how to conduct effective research. Given the importance of “environmental scanning” and issue management, monitoring of organizations, issues, and publics is essential.

Requirements

- **Download an aggregator before class starts.** There are many free aggregators. NetNewsWire (www.newsgator.com/Individuals/NetNewsWire/default.aspx) for the Mac is a good one and, as a professional, if you are going to keep using it after this class, you should spend the \$30 to buy it. For the PC, there are also many free aggregators. NetNewsWire has a PC version on their home page (I have never tried but I am sure is okay, based on the Mac version of the program). Watch the video to learn how to get it up and running (www.newsgator.com/flash/GettingStartedbeta1.htm).
- Monitor/subscribe to at least two industry/organization related feeds and read them daily.
- Monitor one to three of the following news sites daily throughout the semester: *BoingBoing*, *Slashdot*, or *Techdirt*.
- Monitor at least one feed from PR Newswire <PRNewswire.com>.
- Monitor three of the following for headlines and information related to your organization: *The Baltimore Sun*, *The BBC*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The New York Times*, *The Scotsman*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Chicago Sun Times*.
- Prepare two, two-page, single-spaced, memos (see my home page on memo writing). The first memo is due on July 23; the second memo is due the last day of class, August 15.
- In Memo I, briefly identify (1) which feeds you are monitoring; (2) what you consider to be the most important aspect of the organization related feeds as they relate to your organization/area; and (3), what you have learned about public relations after monitoring the various feeds—be specific. For Memo II, (1) discuss the value that you have seen of RSS monitoring in general; (2) discuss whether you think your organization might benefit from having an RSS feed, why, and how it might be used. Be sure to follow memo style and tone when writing your memos.

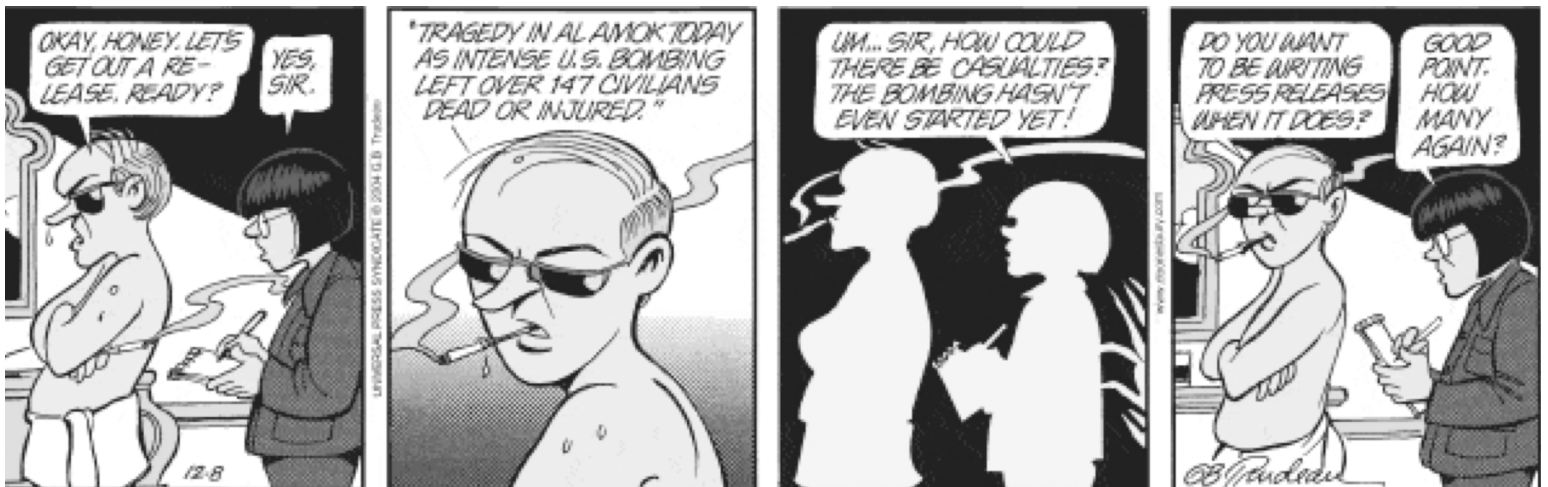


New Release Assignment

For the news release assignment you will write a news release about a fictitious event related to an organization/industry that interests you. Once you have selected an industry or organization, I will provide you with a realistic topic for your news release. Begin by visiting PR Newswire (www.prnewswire.com) and reading several news releases (at least ten). You might start with "Today's News" or "The Latest News," sections if you are not sure of what you want to read. Or, just look up some organization(s) that interest you.

Print out all of the news releases that you read, staple them together, put your name at the top, and bring them to class for July 9. Be prepared to discuss the content of the news releases that you have. Also, on July 9, be sure you have decided what organization or industry you want to represent in your news release so that I can provide you with a news release topic. News releases are due the next day so do not miss this day.

NB: The details on how to write a news release are covered in the several required readings for July 9. be sure that you have read them before you come to class.



Fact Sheet Assignment

The Fact sheet assignment will be both a research and a writing assignment. **First**, you will need to research your organization (from the news release assignment) in more depth. For the purposes of this exercise, visiting the organization’s Web site and reading a dozen (or more) newspaper/magazine articles (obtained through LexisNexis) will be sufficient. You are looking for information about the organizational climate and persona here.

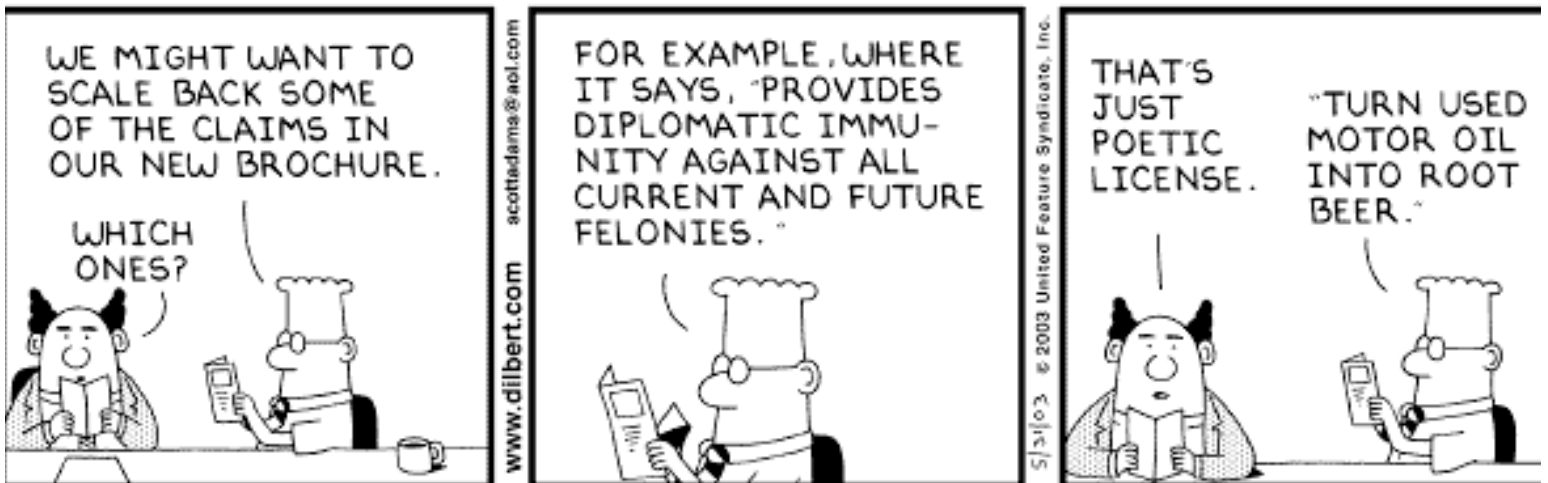
Articles that do little more than mention the organization’s name are insufficient for this assignment. You need to locate and read substantive treatments of the organization. Additionally, although you will be monitoring your organization using an RSS aggregator, I want you to use Lexis/Nexis to locate more information about your organization. You will need to print and include copies with your fact sheet of the newspaper/magazine articles and relevant Web pages that you examine. *Any* information obtained (from any reliable source) may be used for the analysis, below.

Second, analysis: to accompany your fact sheet, prepare a one page (single-spaced) organizational analysis explaining to me the likely climate and persona of your organization and supporting the choices that you make when you are developing your “facts.” You do not have to have a bibliography for this but I want in-text citations to sources (e.g., “NYT, Dec. 12, p. 11”) and quotations from organizational leaders to support your conclusions. The facts that you create should be consistent with your organization’s persona.

Your fact sheet will be of the “fun facts” variety intended for people on plant tours, public events, recruiting, etc. Identify ten “facts” about your organization (real facts from the organization’s Web site or from the research that you conduct) and turn them into “fun facts” using creativity and thoughtfulness.

Additionally, your fact sheets should include the following information:

- Include complete contact information: name, title, address, telephone, e-mail. Use your own information for this not someone from the organization.
- Include appropriate graphic elements or a photograph.
- **Length:** At least 400+ words, (I will verify this with your electronic file so be sure your fact sheet is long enough). Your “facts” will probably not be sufficient to reach this word count. Thus, be prepared to provide some historical/biographical information obtained from the organization’s Web site as well. **NB:** the organizational information does not have to be cited since for this assignment we are assuming that you work for the organization.



Typical Public Relations Activities, Strategies, and Tactics†

- Write a news release, backgrounder, fact sheet, pitch letter, flier, pamphlet, bulletin, or brochure.
- Write an op-ed article, letter to the editor, feature story, or issue advertisement.
- Write material for an annual report.
- Write a public service announcement or a film script.
- Write or deliver a speech.
- Write a White Paper (position/research paper).
- Write a research paper for a professional conference.
- Buy space for an issues advertisement in a newspapers and magazine.
- Buy advertising to support a new corporate initiative.
- Conduct environmental scanning: read local/national newspapers and industry periodicals, visit chat rooms, monitor Blogs and RSS feeds, watch the local/-national news and news programs.
- Commission research, articles, or reports.
- Choose the graphics and color scheme for an organizational logo.
- Conduct lobbying on behalf of your organization.
- Coordinate/organize/host a special event, news conference, exhibit, open house, or annual stockholder meeting.
- Create or design a poster, billboard, transit sign, advertisement, point-of-purchase display, or direct mail package.
- Develop educational materials for public schools.
- Develop, design, or select advertising specialties: pens, magnet, tote bags, coffee mugs, coasters, stress balls, etc.
- Develop or design a Web site, chat room, or electronic information site.
- Edit/Proofread documents: news release, annual report, brochure, magazine article, position paper, speech, advertisement, etc.
- Implement and manage communication initiatives for employees—e.g., a telephone hot line, a bulletin board system, a company newspaper or newsletter, a quarterly video update, etc.
- Meet with city/state/national politician: congressperson, governor, senator, etc.
- Meet with community, city, state or federal leaders, or officials: mayor, school board member, city council member, police chief, ombudsperson, CDC official, etc.
- Meet with a journalist to discuss story ideas.
- Meet with a government bureaucrat, local/state inspector, etc.
- Meet with a spokesperson of a special interest group.
- Negotiate with individuals, organizations, publics, activists, etc.
- Organize or staff a speakers bureau.
- Organize a workshop, professional conference, or news conference.
- Pitch story ideas to a reporter or editor.
- Prepare slides, take photographs, or commission an illustration or artwork.
- Prepare and advise a witness who will give testimony to government committee.
- Prepare and advise an executive who is to be interviewed on a local news network, cable television, or sixty minutes (“Mike Wallace is here to see you sir . . .”).
- Represent your organization on a radio or television talk show.
- Send (mail, e-mail, fax, courier) news releases, pitch letters, invitations, etc.
- Sponsor book, magazine, or television advertising or editorials.
- Testify before Congress or at a public hearing.
- Testify before a citizens advisory panel or committee.

† Based loosely on Ron Pearson’s Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, *A Theory of Public Relations Ethics* (1989), Ohio University.

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual Terms

Familiarize yourself with the *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*. The AP Stylebook is the bible of journalism and public relations. Learn terms thoroughly and use the stylebook as a reference whenever writing a news releases or other print document. Although you are not required to know *everything* in the manual for this class, you do need to learn the terms listed below for the exams. If you want to work in public relations for a living, you must learn the AP rules well.

For the exam: Look up each term. Be aware that *most of the time* (but not all) what you are learning is how the word is used and not what the word means. For example, you all know what the World Wide Web is. What matters is how the word gets written (capital Ws with spaces, etc.), not what the WWW is. Learn *all* of the basic rules (not *every* exception, but all rules that apply in *all* cases) and when to look up exceptions. Also, be able to use each term properly in a sentence. Be sure that your examples are from public relations and not what you might write in an e-mail to your mom. Not: “He said, ‘Dad, can I borrow a dollar?’” But rather, “The weak dollar has created difficulties for U.S. travelers in Europe”...“The cost of the event is \$20” etc. Create original examples when examples in the AP guide are not appropriate in public relations. If a word is not listed in the AP guide, then go to a dictionary—the key information to know in such cases is how the word itself is used (capitalization, possessive/plural, etc.). For exams, you must write all of the rules for each term and give an example of the terms proper use. **Items in bold you should know very well!**

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|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. abbreviations | 31. fund raising/fund-raising/fund raiser | 60. polls |
| 2. academic degrees | 32. governor | 61. possessives |
| 3. accept/except | 33. government bodies | 62. pre |
| 4. affect/effect | 34. high-tech | 63. principal/principle |
| 5. a.m./p.m. | 35. historical periods | 64. quotations |
| 6. B.A., M.A., Ph.D. | 36. holidays | 65. race |
| 7. because, since | 37. hometown | 66. release times |
| 8. brand names | 38. home page | 67. R.S.V.P. |
| 9. call letters | 39. in/into | 68. seasons |
| 10. capitalization | 40. initials | 69. semi |
| 11. co- | 41. its/it's | 70. sentences |
| 12. compliment/complement | 42. lay/laid/lie | 71. should/would |
| 13. composition titles | 43. legislative titles | 72. south |
| 14. congress | 44. long-term | 73. state names |
| 15. corps | 45. majority/plurality | 74. telephone numbers |
| 16. county | 46. man/humanity | 75. their, there, they're |
| 17. couple | 47. Medicare/Medicaid | 76. time element |
| 18. courtesy titles | 48. mid- | 77. time zones |
| 19. dangling modifiers | 49. months | 78. titles |
| 20. dates | 50. Mr., Mrs., Ms. | 79. to, two, too |
| 21. datelines | 51. music | 80. TV/television |
| 22. distances | 52. newspaper names | 81. verbs |
| 23. Dr./doctor | 53. large numbers | 82. Web site, Web page, etc. |
| 24. dollars | 54. part-time | 83. weekend |
| 25. either/neither | 55. party affiliation | 84. Western Hemisphere |
| 26. editor | 56. people/peoples/person/persons | 85. who, whom, that, which |
| 27. e-mail | 57. Ph.D./Professor | 86. World Wide Web |
| 28. family names | 58. phenomenon/phenomena | 87. years |
| 29. fewer/less | 59. plurals | |

For those interested in sports or business public relations see the special sections on those topics

Name: _____ Assignment: _____ Date: _____

Overall Release Format

- 8.5" by 11" white paper.
- Wide margins—at least 1.5."
- Double-space the entire release except for the address information and header—double, double space between the release's paragraphs.
- Identify yourself in the upper left corner—include: contact person's name, title, company name, postal address, telephone, fax, e-mail.
- "For Immediate Release" line—or embargo date (only when absolutely necessary).
- Headline: CENTERED, BOLD AND CAPITALIZED.** Neither write a catchy, newspaper-like headline nor a boring academic paragraph. Write an "informative" headline.
- Leave about two inches between the bottom of "for immediate release" and the top of the release's first paragraph for editing—center the headline in this area.
- Never break a paragraph across pages—start the paragraph on a new page if you have to.
- Include "More" at the bottom of all pages that continue to another page.
- Include a "slug" and page number, on all pages after the first (identifying info., top, right).
- Include a "boiler-plate" (informational) ¶ about the organization—2nd till last ¶. The boiler-plate ¶ is about the organization sending the release not the Public relations firm writing it.
- Include a "for more information, contact..." paragraph—last ¶.
- Place hash marks (###), centered, at the end of the document on a separate line.

Content

- Dateline (location and date, no year, in parentheses)—capitalize the city and state.
- Your news release has a news angle (state it briefly): _____
- Compelling/interesting summary lead using some (not all) of the five W's and H.
- The introduction should get interest/attention, reveal the topic, establish the newsworthiness, and reinforce your organization's credibility, if necessary.
- Make the release concise—you are reporting a newsworthy event not writing an editorial.
- Use short, active, sentences. If you need a comma, then the sentence is probably too long.
- Include supporting quotes that add information to your news angle.
- Localize and tailor the release, quote well-known, credible, sources not the Pub. Rel. director
- Be sure the release is free of cliches, technojargon, and unfamiliar terminology.
- Check the Associated Press Stylebook for proper usage: numbers, times, abbreviations, etc.
- Be sure that every fact is checked—be sure names are correct, check grammar/spelling.
- Review your organizations policy on disclosure.
- Write according to the inverted pyramid.
- The topic in the news release is localized and tailored for this media outlet.
- Someone else has read the final release before you give it to the instructor or mail it off. Final drafts are expected to be ready to be put in the envelope and mailed to the media.

Miscellaneous

- Lead and following paragraphs are short and kept to three–five sentences.
- Each paragraph follows-up on the news angle mentioned in the headline and the lead.
- If you have quotes, then start the paragraphs with them, then provide attribution.
- Never use "which" (this is often a run-on).
- Avoid vague pronoun use: "he, she, it, they, their." Be specific. Always use proper names.
- Avoid starting sentences with a dependent clause. "Because of the number of people interested in the event, . . ." Instead: "The event is attracting a lot of attention. . . ."
- Periods, commas, etc. go inside of quotes—as illustrated throughout this handout.
- Avoid "ing" verbs like the plague. Not: "Big Widget Corp. is planning to..." Instead: "Big Widget Corp. will . . ."
- Watch slang—got to, would of, could of, should of, etc.
- Can you say this more concisely?

Pitch Letters

Opening

1. **Address the letter** to a person.
2. **Identify yourself** or your agency by name.
3. More adequately **explain why you are writing**.
4. **Allude to story ideas** in the first few sentences.
5. Spent **too much space on you** or your organization and not the story.
6. Too long—**cut to the chase**.
7. Have a smooth **transition** to the body.

Body

8. Use **concrete examples** of what you can do for the client.
9. Allude to **specific story ideas**—e.g., “the first story angle might discuss X...”
10. **Elaborate** on story ideas.
11. **Avoid jargon** all costs if possible—be sure to explain it if used.
12. **One thought per paragraph**.
13. **Letter is too long**—say it quickly, busy people do not read long letters.

Overall

14. Create **letterhead** to identify your organization.
15. **Address the letter to a person** and not the “business editor.”
16. Explain the **benefits** of the story for the news-source’s readers.
17. **Personalize/localize** the letter and story ideas.
18. **Transition** between paragraphs needed.
19. **Offer yourself as a resource** for information, photos, interviews etc.
20. **Vague** explanation, point, or suggestion.
21. **Sentences/paragraphs** are long, rambling, pedantic, or difficult to follow.
22. **Lectured editor** about what readers “should do/know” or the newsworthiness of the story.
23. **Word choice**. Think more carefully about the implicit and explicit meaning of words.
24. **Avoid** “we, them, they, their, its, the company,” etc. Be specific with references.
25. **Avoid extra words**: just, in order to, is planning to, will be able to, etc.
26. **Hackneyed** phrase—avoid clichés.
27. **Check possessives**.
28. Awkward/Unclear.
29. **Verb/tense** agreement problems.
30. **Proofread more carefully**. Esp.: spelling, spacing, grammar, run-ons/fragments.

Closing

31. **No wrap up** (make final appeal)—look back at your opening for suggestions to close.
32. **Explain the resources you bring to a story**: pictures, fact sheets, interview(s), etc.
33. **State the day and time that you will call** to discuss the story ideas.

Opening sentence creates interest in the topic and your client: _____

Statements are accurate and realistic: _____

Several story angles presented: _____

Grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation are correct: _____

You offer yourself as a resource and/or other organizational members: _____

Final sentence anchors your claim that your ideas are newsworthy: _____

Total:

Comments:

Portfolio Development

Portfolio: portfolio \Port*fol"i'o\, n. [F. portefeuille; porter to carry + feuille a leaf. See Port to carry, and Folio.]

1. a hinged cover or flexible case for carrying loose papers, pictures, or pamphlets
2. [from the use of such a case to carry documents of state]: the office and functions of a minister of state or member of a cabinet
3. the securities held by an investor: the commercial paper held by a financial house (as a bank)
4. a set of pictures (as drawings or photographs) either bound in book form or loose in a folder.

As the definition above suggests, portfolios are created for a variety of purposes. As definition four suggests, any book used to carry documents can be called a portfolio. For our purposes, portfolio refers to a book (a spiral binder with three-hole punched pages, plastic page protectors, etc.) that can be used to exhibit your professional work.

Considerations:

- Place your résumé in the front of your portfolio—with extra copies in the back.
- Your portfolio should be designed so that you can easily insert and remove pages as you update it. Plastic page protectors and three ring binders work nicely. Use the kind with the front and side “view windows” so you can easily update the cover.
- Your portfolio should be professionally compiled. Everything should be in final draft form, everything should be professionally printed, everything should “look” as professional as possible.
- Your portfolio should be organized rhetorically. The best examples of your work are near the front; sections dividers have been created if appropriate; examples of the same type of work have been placed together.
- Your portfolio contains error-free examples of your best work.
- Your portfolio should be created using high-quality materials. Avoid paper or flexible plastic folders; laser print copies or color/B&W inkjet copies on the “best” setting—use “brilliant white” papers (93%+ whiteness), use color when appropriate.
- Tab sections worth special attention or specific to the type of job you might be applying for.
- Include samples of published work; include samples of work appropriate to the position you are applying for; include samples that illustrate your individual skills.
- Include “work in process” if appropriate (in professional form), and include “interesting” projects to arouse interest and show that you are creative.
- The portfolio is a “sales” tool. Do not apologize for its content or look—you should not have to. Do not oversell your skills or undersell your accomplishments.
- Your portfolio will be speaking for you so do not let it say: “lazy,” “has no attention to detail,” or “is not very competent.”

Propaganda, Advertising, Marketing, Merchandizing & Public Relations

Propaganda

- Tries to generate conditioned reflexes that replace reasoned actions. The end justifies the means.
- Accomplishes goals through propagandistic strategies: appeal to authority, bandwagon, fear, glittering generalities, name-calling (ad hominem), plain folks, testimonials, transfer (substitution), slippery slope.
- *Controlled* use of the media.

Advertising

- Tries to create desire and to motivate demand for a product or idea.
- Design advertisements, write messages, purchase broadcast time, and conduct research (readership, persuasion, analysis of publics, etc.).
- May supplement public relations/marketing efforts.
- *Controlled* use of the media.

Marketing

- The process of planning and executing the conception (product), pricing, promotion and distribution (place) of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives (American Marketing Association).
- Interested in two questions: (1) is there a need or desire for this product? (2) If a need exists, among what audiences and in what form is it likely to be well received?
- Marketing is targeted primarily to *consumers*, although some internal marketing does occur.
- Marketing often employs press agency (special events, special appearances), and publicity (announcements of new products, etc.).
- Advertising, copy testing, and market research are staples of marketing.
- *Controlled* use of the media.

Merchandizing

- Concerned with the *packaging* of products, ideas, services, and individuals.
- Merchandizing research explores the impact that packaging, texture, shape, color, scent, and images have on the acceptance, satisfaction, desire, and attraction to products.
- Merchandizing examines what types of in-store, and point-of-purchase displays best attract consumers/clients.
- Merchandizing also creates sales scripts, and answers to FAQs for suppliers, dealers, and sales people.
- *Controlled* use of the media.

Public Relations:

- Works to create and maintain relationships between organizations and publics.
- Uses research, analysis/planning, communication, and evaluation.
- Dialogic communication and two-way communication are staples of successful public relations.
- *Uncontrolled* use of the media.

Dialogue as a Framework for Ethical Public Relations

Many public relations students and professionals have learned about the “models of public relations” that describe the progression of the profession from a one-way press agency/publicity model of public relations to a two-way practice with emphasis on persuasion and relationship management (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). In some cases, scholars have suggested that the best model for practicing public relations is the two-way symmetrical approach (Grunig 1992b). At this point in your studies of public relations you should know that it would be impossible for only one model to account for everything. Communication and society is just too complicated and organizations and publics are too diverse. See figure 6.1 for a brief reminder of what the Grunig and Hunt model describes.

(Grunig and Hunt, 1989)	One-Way Models		Two-Way Models	
	Press Agency/ Publicity	Public Information	Two-Way Asymmetrical	Two-Way Symmetrical
Purpose	Propaganda	Dissemination of information	Scientific persuasion	Mutual understanding
Organizational Contribution	Advocacy	Dissemination of information	Advocacy	Mediation
Nature of Communication	One-way; complete truth not essential	One-way, Truth is important	Two-way; imbalanced effects	Two-way; balanced effects
Communication Model	Source→Receiver	Source→Rec.	Source→Rec. ←feedback→	Group→Group
Nature of Research	None; “counting house”	Little; readability, readership	Evaluative of Attitude	Evaluative of Understanding
Types of Organizations	Celebrities, etc. Fashion Sports Org. Politicians	Public Health Org. Nonprofit Org. Activist Group Politicians	For Profit Org. The U.S. President The U.S. Military Politicians	Human Resources Dept. Governing Bodies- Faculty Senate, etc. Politicians
Specific Example	Madonna	MADD	Microsoft	Michael Kent

What the Grunig and Hunt model illustrates well is that there are very diverse ways in which public relations is practiced and that different kinds of public relations are best practiced using different techniques. Public information, for example, as well as political public relations is guided by the assumption that the organization (or politician) knows what is best for the public. Thus, public information is often paternalistic, partisan, and unidirectional (sender to receiver).

How to Prepare your Chapter Questions

Learning how to read critically is one of the most important skills for a professional. In many fields, especially communication fields like public relations, practitioners must process a lot of information every day from a variety of sources: newspapers, magazines, professional journals, the Internet, reports, etc.

In the “real world,” reading involves more than memorizing facts for tests. The most successful professionals are skilled at reading critically: i.e., identifying key issues, asking important questions, and knowing when to ask about, or learn about, what s/he does not already know.

As a means of helping you to become more skilled critical readers and questioners, a substantial portion of your grade is tied up in weekly “questions” that you will need to have ready the day we are discussing each week’s readings. I also expect you to actually raise your questions in class. You are not preparing questions just to waste your time.

Assuming that you have done your reading, the time it will take to prepare each set of questions is fairly short, perhaps 10–15 minutes, even if you are a slow typist. In order to keep you on track and encourage you to participate in class, I will select one or two students each class to be in charge of asking questions (and writing notes on the board) if no one else will.

Requirements

For each set of questions you must include a complete (APA) bibliographic entry for each chapter, article, book, set of notes, etc. that you reviewed that week, every time that you submit questions. Also, be sure to include in-text citations (Author, date, page/pages) in your questions.

You should write at least 26 lines worth of questions (not counting your header, contact information, and references). Assuming that you double-space your questions, they will be about 1.25 pages in length. You may space-and-a-half your questions (even though this is not proper APA form) if you want to keep your questions to one page. Do not single-space your questions.

As you will see below, I am not looking for “test questions” or questions that necessarily have an answer. I am looking for discussion questions that make an effort to tease out the details/issues from the readings. Do not ask a “question” and then “answer” it by quoting from the textbook. I am not looking for text questions. Similarly, I do not want a list of simplistic questions that are already answered in the text or that you pulled from the text five minutes before class. What I want to see are questions that you generated that indicate that you are reading and confronting the text.

Your questions should do four things

- (1) Demonstrate to me that you have done the reading by asking sophisticated and relevant questions;
- (2) Draw upon other areas of knowledge that you alone bring to bear on the class (business, sociology, psychology, personal experience, etc.). I want to see that you are going beyond the text and readings.
- (3) **Meet the length requirement.** Be sure to have 26 lines of questions. I will deduct points accordingly if short. Do not ask a bunch of short, obvious, one-line ques-

tions just to take up space. If you feel like you have no questions about a particular chapter/reading (which is unlikely if you have read critically), then go ahead and read ahead and start asking questions about the next chapter.

- (4) **Never use Arial, Chicago, Courier, Helvetica, Times, or Times New Roman**, for your font. Use only Bookman or Bookman Old Style. I will not accept or grade any assignment not using one of these fonts. I will mark them as late and you will need to resubmit your questions to get credit.

Additional Notes

- Format paragraphs as illustrated below.
- You may space-and-a-half or double-space questions and citations. Do not double space contact information.
- Do not start sentence with the word “it.” Rewrite them if you need to so that your referent is clearer.
- Do not use any contractions (isn’t can’t, etc.).
- Format all citations properly (APA style). Do not place words in bold or underline them in your citations, follow the APA manual or my handout <.../~mkent/PDFs/KentWritingRules.pdf>.
- **Do not write: “On page 5 Robert Heath and Tim Coombs say . . .”** First, they did not “say” anything unless you heard them speak—they wrote it. Second, we do not cite first names in APA style to maintain gender neutrality. Third, good writers ask their questions and place the citations at the end of the sentence as I have illustrated in the examples.
- Do not add courtesy or professional titles to the ends of names when citing sources. Never write “Kent, Ph.D., suggests . . .”, “Doctor Taylor argued . . .”, “Professor Rhodes said . . .” However, “Governor Clinton claims . . .” is okay, but just “Clinton” (with a citation) is better.
- Do not include lengthy block quotes just to take up space. Paraphrase the author and include a citation so we can look at it as you ask your question. We all have the same readings/sources.

See annotated and non-annotated examples below.
--

Include complete contact information at the top of every document that you create from now on. Professionals include complete contact information on everything.

(Align left or right, but not centered. Do not use tabs or spaces to get here) **Michael L. Kent, Ph.D.**
(Use whatever department is appropriate) **Communication Studies**
(Follow the rules from my handout on formatting e-mail) **E-mail:** KentM@Mail.Montclair.edu
(Include the words “Telephone” and “E-mail”) **Telephone:** (973) 655-5214
Tuesday, June 19, 2007

¶ break, Title of text and chapter as indicated, center title, bold title, underlining is optional.

Heath and Coombs: Chapter Five: Elements of Planning

Note: Use the bulleting command, then back the text up using “decrease indent” so your bullets rest on the left margin not indented.

- In the case study, Heath and Coombs wrote that TETCO paid the expenses for the victims (2006, pp. 141-142). Notice the full citations here. Why should TETCO have paid for housing and expenses for all of those people to be relocated when they did not do anything wrong?
- Notice that this “sample” does not have 25 lines. I expect your samples to be long enough. See the next sample for what I expect.
- The authors explain that objectives are part of the planning process (p. 149) Notice I have included only a page number here. In APA style, once you have fully cited a source you do not have to include everything again as long as you have not changed sources in-between and cited someone else. but are not most objectives obvious from the start of a campaign?
- The authors mention Gantt and PERT charts (p. 150) but never really explain them. Could you explain what these are?
- Heath and Coombs talk about “vision statements” (p. 153) but do not explain them adequately. In my introduction to business class I learned . . . is this the same thing in public relations since we are talking about campaigns?

Bibliography

Heath, R. L., & Coombs, W. T. (2006). *Today's public relations: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

(Note: bibliographic entries format as a hanging indents, as illustrated here. Do not use a hard return and a tab to do this. Learn to set a proper hanging indent with the ruler at the top of the page, or with the format/paragraph/ hanging indent command. Watch capitalization and spacing between initials (they get one space not two-spaces or no-space). Never use bold type; book/journal titles get italicized. Format questions as “hanging indents” as illustrated here. Do not include page numbers when citing entire books (chapters in edited volumes are different and this text is not an edited volume), page numbers appear in your in-text references only.

Martin, T. K. Nakayama & L. A. Flores: Chapter 5

- Nance and Foeman point out that “The identity that we avow may not be the one that is ascribed to us by others” (2002, p. 36). What do they mean by this? Who gets to decide our identity and what are the consequences?
- If race is not about blood (p. 37), then when Steve Martin in “The Jerk” says: “I was born a poor black child,” is he being truthful? How could a “white” person be “black” by race we implicitly mean color?
- Since Martinez was raised as a member of the “White,” dominant culture, how can she claim that she is Chicana or even a Lesbian? Is it not a bit disingenuous to want to “know your culture” as an adult? Why is it necessary, are there parallels in other parts of society?
- Martinez suggests that “The American Dream” implies a hierarchy or dichotomy: lazy/hardworking, smart/ignorant, etc. (2002, p. 71), does she have a point or is she just complaining? Do everyday people really have any chance of changing how others (their co-workers, friends, family, etc.) see them?
- Orbe and Hopson (2002) just seem to find what they are looking for here. This whole “research project” seems like self-fulfilling prophecy. How would it be possible to study groups or individuals like this without resorting to stereotypes? How do people study gays/lesbians, disabled people, or the elderly, without labeling them?
- The authors suggest that Montana’s reaction to Syrus is essentially unfounded, based on stereotypes (p. 223, ¶ 4). Is it not more likely that Syrus was chosen because he was a jerk (as the authors imply elsewhere) and so Montana’s reaction was justified?
- In the conclusion the authors claim that “Black images have been filtered through the racial misconceptions and fantasies of the dominant White culture which has continued to deny the existence of a rich and resilient Black culture of equal worth” (p. 224). Is not a more likely conclusion that White culture simply does not care, as is true of almost all dominant cultures?

Martinez, J. M. (2002). Learning to see what I was never supposed to see: Becoming Chicana in a white world. In J. N. Martin, T. K. Nakayama & L. A. Flores (Eds.), *Readings in intercultural communication: Experiences and contexts (2nd edition)* (pp. 67-73). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Nance, T. A. & Foeman, A. K. (2002). On being biracial in the United States. In J. N. Martin, T. K. Nakayama & L. A. Flores (Eds.), *Readings in intercultural communication: Experiences and contexts (2nd edition)* (pp. 35-43). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Orbe, M. P. & Hopson, M. C. (2002). Looking at the front door: Exploring images of the black male on MTV’s *The Real World*. In J. N. Martin, T. K. Nakayama & L. A. Flores (Eds.), *Readings in intercultural communication: Experiences and contexts (2nd edition)* (pp. 219-226). Boston: McGraw Hill.

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This coupon entitles the bearer to one of the following (check box):

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- Rewrite one assignment (not already an A- or above) within one week of it being returned.
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