

City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by Department of English
with effect from Semester A 2016 /17

Part I Course Overview

Public Relations Writing in English

Course Title:

EN4519

Course Code:

1 semester

Course Duration:

3

Credit Units:

B3

Level:

Arts and Humanities

Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations

Science and Technology

Proposed Area:

(for GE courses only)

English

Medium of Instruction:

English

Medium of Assessment:

Nil

Prerequisites:

(Course Code and Title)

Nil

Precursors:

(Course Code and Title)

Nil

Equivalent Courses:

(Course Code and Title)

Nil

Exclusive Courses:

(Course Code and Title)

Nil

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

The course aims to:

- convey the fundamentals of public relations principles and practice to provide a working framework within which to execute public relations writing genres.
- introduce students to the working lifecycle of a public relations campaign from planning to execution and evaluation so that they can evaluate the best professional responses to public relations scenarios.
- enable students to apply public relations writing principles to practice across a selection of persuasive texts typically required in an everyday working context.
- provide examples of best practice in public relations writing and management as a way of benchmarking effective public relations work.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Create and apply public relations writing skills to produce a wide range of effective promotional copy for both controlled and uncontrolled forms of publicity for public relations purposes (press releases, feature articles, new stories, bios, annual reports, media pitches, backgrounders, mission and crisis statements) using a mix of media to reach the target audience with the desired effect		X	X	X
2.	Classify key stakeholders and their viewpoints as a way of measuring and managing public opinion to adjust writing styles to reach the intended audience and impact on them cognitively, affectively and behaviorally		X	X	X
3.	Identify what public relations writing is, and what it does in a variety of organisational contexts		X	X	X
4	Compose and implement public relations messages for target various media channels and be able to evaluate their relative strengths and usefulness for media placements from the perspective of the public relations practitioner		X	X	X
		100%			

* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4			
Mini-lectures and applied learning individual activities	The teaching and learning activities cover two major areas including exploring the foundations of public relations writing and writing news releases, bios, backgrounders, news and feature articles, crisis statements, op-eds, mission statements and writing various public relations messages.	✓						throughout the semester
Problem based learning activities	Students evaluate classification models for identifying stakeholders and how to develop public relations messages to answer stakeholder needs across a range of public relations genres		✓					4 weeks
Critical analysis of public relations texts	Students generate a wide range of public relations written genres and critique the purpose and effectiveness of these genre based examples culminating in an individual evaluation of a piece of public relations writing			✓				3 weeks
Writing workshops	Students apply various writing techniques to suit the selected media channels used by public relations professionals to communicate effective messages to stakeholders such as writing for websites, social media, print and online newsletters, annual reports, broadcast media plus writing for the eye and the ear				✓			3 weeks

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3	4				
Continuous Assessment: 100 %								
Public Relations critique and re-write of PR example	✓		✓	✓			40%	Individual work; assessed individually
News Release writing test	✓			✓			20%	Individual work; assessed individually
Public Relations Case Study analysis and media kit writing		✓	✓	✓			40%	Group work, assessed as a group
Examination: ____% (duration: _____, if applicable)								
							100%	

* The weightings should add up to 100%.

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Adequate (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Public Relations Critique and re-write of PR example (40%)	Content (20 marks)	(80% and above) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content is very well analysed and developed; ◆ All relevant information is included for analysis; ◆ The information is comprehensively analyzed and explained; ◆ The information and message are effectively conveyed; ◆ The purpose of the analysis and re-write 	(65% - 79%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content is competently selected and developed; ◆ The information included for analysis is sufficient; ◆ The information is sufficiently analyzed and explained; ◆ The information and message are clearly conveyed; ◆ The purpose of the analysis and 	(50% - 64%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content selected for analysis is sufficient; ◆ Only part of the relevant data is included for analysis; ◆ Only part of the information is analyzed and explained; ◆ Only part of the information and message are clearly conveyed; ◆ The purpose of the analysis and re-write is partially achieved. 	(40% - 49%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content selected for analysis is sketchy and inadequate; ◆ Only limited data is incorporated for analysis; ◆ The analysis is not informative and comprehensive; ◆ Only limited information and message is conveyed; ◆ The purpose of the analysis and re-write are not clearly stated. 	(39% and below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content selected for analysis is highly inadequate; ◆ Very limited or inaccurate data is incorporated for analysis; ◆ The analysis is not at all comprehensible; ◆ Very limited information and message is conveyed; ◆ The purpose of the analysis and re-write are not achieved in any way.

		are completely achieved.	re-write are achieved.			
	Language and style (20 marks)	<p>(80% and above)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is highly accurate, with 80%-100% accuracy; ◆ Use of vocabulary is very concise, precise and varied; 	<p>(65% to 79%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is accurate, with 65%-79% accuracy; ◆ Use of vocabulary is concise, precise and varied; <p>Style and tone are appropriate</p>	<p>(50% - 64%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is somewhat accurate, with 50%-64% accuracy; ◆ Use of vocabulary is somewhat concise, precise and varied; 	<p>(40% - 49%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is inaccurate, with 40%-49% accuracy; exhibit a great deal of residual and editorial problems. ◆ Use of vocabulary is limited and repetitive ◆ Style and tone are generally 	<p>(39% and below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is very inaccurate, below 39% accuracy; exhibit very serious of residual and editorial problems. ◆ Use of vocabulary is not concise, varied, and incomprehensible; ◆ Style and tone are

		Style and tone are highly appropriate;		Style and tone are somewhat appropriate.	inappropriate.	totally inappropriate
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Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Adequate (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
News Release writing test (20%)	Content (10 marks)	<p>(80% and above)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content is extremely well-presented using the inverted pyramid structure and is extremely well developed; ◆ The lead sentence and headline contain all of the relevant information according to the “W” formula ◆ All relevant information is 	<p>(65% to 79%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content is competently presented using the inverted pyramid structure and is very well developed; ◆ The lead sentence and headline contain most of the relevant information according to the “W” formula ◆ The information is sufficiently covered 	<p>(50% - 64%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content is adequately presented using the inverted pyramid structure and is adequately developed; ◆ The lead sentence and headline contain only partial information according to the “W” formula ◆ Only part of the information are clearly conveyed and includes sufficient attributions; 	<p>(40% - 49%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content is sketchy and inadequately presented using the inverted pyramid structure and is adequately developed and is not well developed; ◆ The lead sentence and headline contain inadequate information according to the “W” formula ◆ Only limited data is included with poor attributions; ◆ The information and PR messages 	<p>(39% and below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The content is very sketchy and highly inadequate in presentation using the inverted pyramid structure and is very badly developed; ◆ The lead sentence and headline contain highly inadequate information according to the “W” formula ◆ Very limited or inaccurate data is incorporated with no attributions; ◆ Very limited

		<p>very well covered including excellent attributions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The information and key PR messages are effectively conveyed; ◆ The purpose of writing the news release is completely achieved. 	<p>including good attributions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The information and PR messages are clearly conveyed and explained; ◆ The purpose of writing the news release is achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The information and PR messages are clearly conveyed and explained; ◆ The purpose of writing the news release is partially achieved 	<p>are poorly conveyed and explained. The purpose of writing the news release is not fully achieved.</p>	<p>information and PR messages are badly conveyed and explained; The purpose of writing the news release is not achieved in any way.</p>
	<p>Language and style (10 marks)</p>	<p>(80% and above)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is highly accurate, with 	<p>(65% to 79%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is accurate, with 65%-79% 	<p>(50% - 64%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is somewhat accurate, with 	<p>(40% - 49%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is inaccurate, with 40%-49% accuracy; exhibit a great deal of 	<p>(39% and below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is very inaccurate, below 39% accuracy; exhibit very serious of

		80%-100% accuracy; ◆ Use of vocabulary is very concise, precise and varied; ◆ Style and tone are highly appropriate	accuracy; ◆ Use of vocabulary is concise, precise and varied; ◆ Style and tone are appropriate	50%-64% accuracy; ◆ Use of vocabulary is somewhat concise, precise and varied; ◆ Style and tone are somewhat appropriate	residual and editorial problems. ◆ Use of vocabulary is limited and repetitive ◆ Style and tone are generally inappropriate	residual and editorial problems. ◆ Use of vocabulary is not concise, varied, and incomprehensible; ◆ Style and tone are totally inappropriate
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Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Adequate (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
Public Relations Case Study analysis and media kit writing (40%)	Content (20 marks)	(80% and above) ◆ The issue is extremely well analysed and the PR written response is very well developed; ◆ All relevant information is included for	(65% to 79%) ◆ The issue is well analysed and the PR response is competently developed; ◆ The information included for analysis and in writing the PR	(50% - 64%) ◆ The issue is sufficiently analysed and the PR written response is also sufficient; ◆ Only part of the relevant information is included for analysis and in	(40% - 49%) ◆ The issue analysis and PR written response is sketchy and inadequate; ◆ Only limited information is incorporated for analysis and in writing the PR response;	(39% and below) ◆ The issue analysis and PR written response are highly inadequate; ◆ Very limited or inaccurate information is incorporated for analysis and in writing the PR

		<p>analysis and in writing the PR response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The case information is comprehensively analyzed and extremely well developed in writing the PR response; 	<p>response is sufficient;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The case information is sufficiently analyzed and reasonably well developed in writing the PR response; ◆ The PR messages are well conveyed and clearly developed in writing the PR response 	<p>writing the PR response;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Only part of the case information is analyzed and developed in writing the PR response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The case analysis and written PR response are not informative and comprehensive 	<p>response;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The case analysis and written PR response are not at all comprehensible; ◆ Very limited PR messages are conveyed and are very poorly developed in writing the PR response
	Language and style (20 marks)	(80% and above)	(65% to 79%)	(50% - 64%)	(40% - 49%)	(39% and below)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language (sentence structure, grammar -- tenses, articles, prepositions, parts of speech, etc.) is

		<p>speech, etc.) is highly accurate, with 80%-100% accuracy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use of vocabulary is very concise, precise and varied; ◆ Style and tone are highly appropriate. 	<p>parts of speech, etc.) is accurate, with 65%-79% accuracy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use of vocabulary is concise, precise and varied; ◆ Style and tone are appropriate. 	<p>etc.) is somewhat accurate, with 50%-64% accuracy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use of vocabulary is somewhat concise, precise and varied; ◆ Style and tone are somewhat appropriate. 	<p>inaccurate, with 40%-49% accuracy; exhibit a great deal of residual and editorial problems;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use of vocabulary is limited and repetitive; ◆ Style and tone are generally inappropriate 	<p>very inaccurate, below 39% accuracy; exhibit very serious of residual and editorial problems;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use of vocabulary is not concise, varied, and incomprehensible ◆ ;Style and tone are totally inappropriate
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Mark <-> grade conversion guidelines:

Grade A +	=	20 marks
Grade A	=	19 marks
Grade A-	=	18 marks
Grade B+	=	17 marks
Grade B	=	15-16 marks
Grade B-	=	14 marks
Grade C+	=	12-13 marks
Grade C	=	11 marks
Grade C-	=	10 marks
Grade D	=	8-9 marks
Grade F	=	1-7 marks

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

Public relations writing; target audience analysis; public opinion formation; corporate communications; news conferences; writing press releases; backgrounders; stakeholders; feature articles; bios; pitch letters; media kits; crisis communications; mission statements; speeches; scriptwriting; presentations; issue relations; corporate citizenship; media relations.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	<i>Public Relations Writing - Form and Style</i> by Doug Newsom and Jim Haynes, 2005, 7 th edition, Wadsworth: Belmont, California.
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2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	<i>The Business of Public Relations</i> , E. W. Brody (1987) New York: Praeger, HD59 B757 1987.
2.	<i>The Essentials of PR</i> , Sam Black (1993): London: Kogan Page, HD59 B53
3.	<i>The Dartnell PR Handbook</i> , Robert L. Dilenschneider, Dan J. Forrester, (1987) Chicago: Dartnell Corp. HD 59 D28 1987.
4.	<i>Enhancing your PR</i> , Beth DePoint, (1989) HD59 D27 1989.
5.	<i>PR as Communications Management</i> , R.E Crable and Steven L. Vibbert, (1986) New York: Bellwether Press, HD59.C73 1986.
6.	<i>PR Techniques</i> , F. Jefkins, (1994) 2 nd Edition, London: Butterworth, HD59 J433 1994.
7.	<i>Effective PR Management</i> , Paul Winner, (1993) 2nd Edition, London: Kogan Page.
8.	<i>Creating corporate reputations: identity, image and performance</i> (2001) G. Dowling. Oxford: OUP HD59.2 D695.2001.
9.	<i>E-PR: the essential guide to public relations on the Internet</i> , Matt Haig, (2000) London, Dover NH: Kogan Page. HD59.H23 2000.
10.	<i>Effective PR</i> , Scott M. Cutlipp, Allen H. Center, Glen M. Broom 8 th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, HM1221.C88 2000.
11.	<i>Guerilla PR wired: waging a successful publicity campaign online, offline and everywhere in between</i> , Michael Levine, Chicago: McGraw Hill (2002) HD59.L483 2002.
12.	<i>Handbook of Public Relations</i> Robert L.Heath (ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications (2001) HD59. H297 2001.
13.	<i>Mediawriting: print, broadcast and public relations</i> , W. Richard Whitaker, Janet E. Ramsey, Ronald D. Smith, New York: Longman, (2000) P96.A86 W48 2000.
14.	<i>Writing and Reporting News</i> , Carole Rich (1997) 2 nd ed. Belmont, California: Wadsworth, PN4781.R42 1997.
15.	<i>Reaching audiences: a guide to media writing</i> , Katherine McAdams (1996), Boston: Allyn & Bacon, P96.A86 M38 1996.
16.	<i>Public Relations Writing - Form and Style</i> by Doug Newsom and Bob Carrell, 2001, 6 th edition, Wadsworth: Belmont California. HD263.N493 2001.