

## Spring 2012

**COURSE:** Basic Public Relations Writing

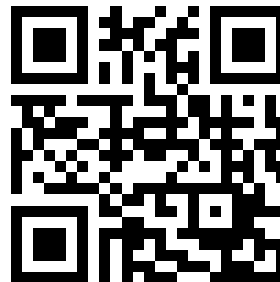
**INSTRUCTOR:** M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA  
856-767-7730 (Home); **Fax--856-673-0717**  
(Please leave message and you will get a return call)  
email: [larry@larrylitwin.com](mailto:larry@larrylitwin.com) [www.larrylitwin.com]

**OFFICE:** Room 138 – Bozorth [256-4224]

**Scan for contact info:**



**Scan for website:**



**BOOKS, readings and PowerPoints for this class will be discussed during first class meeting. Visit [www.larrylitwin.com](http://www.larrylitwin.com) to view and download PowerPoints and other handouts [Student Resources > Handouts].**

Each student must complete all assignments. Class participation is also considered for semester grade. Therefore, it is important that students attend all classes, interact and ask questions. Anyone who arrives late should inform Prof. Litwin. Deadlines and accuracy are vital in the communication profession and are factored into final grades. **Missed tests may not be made up. Late assignments will be downgraded 10 points. Cell phones are off limits during class: No calls – no texting – no IMing. An occasional glance to check the time is acceptable. But don't "push it."** A key to your contributions: **No excuses. No exceptions.**

**More than three absences WILL affect a student's grade.**

Prof. Litwin uses SMU's "Teaching Naked" approach in the classroom. Therefore, it is imperative that students visit [www.larrylitwin.com](http://www.larrylitwin.com) and [www.slideshare.net](http://www.slideshare.net) on a regular basis (prior to classes) in addition to relying on previous lecture notes. Knowing assignment content in advance of class makes classes more stimulating and enjoyable. Three more important points: Late assignments **emailed** must be sent to [rowanassignment@gmail.com](mailto:rowanassignment@gmail.com); and it is each student's responsibility to check

his/her email at least once a day. Professor Litwin sends many emails – pdf handouts throughout the semester. Their intent is to save students money. Also, student report cards are posted regularly. Students may link to their report card via [www.larrylitwin.com](http://www.larrylitwin.com) > [Student Resources](#) > [MicroGrade](#). The log in is your **LAST** name. Your password is your Banner Number.

**BOOKS NEEDED FOR THIS COURSE:**

***The Public Relations Practitioner’s Playbook***

(Third Edition [Purple Cover], AuthorHouse, 2009)

**Author – M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA**

***The ABCs of Strategic Communication***

(Second Edition [Green Cover], AuthorHouse, 2008)

**Author – M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA**

***Write Right***

(First Edition, AuthorHouse, 2005)

**Author – Roger A. Shapiro**

***The Associated Press Stylebook***

(2011 Edition)

**OBJECTIVE:** To write effectively for mass – and not so *mass* – media audiences and to refine both oral and written communication skills. Basic Public Relations Writing introduces students to the tasks of writing and editing required in a public relations position. Students will learn to write for print and electronic media, develop their skills in grammar, syntax and usage, and learn to copy edit their own work and the work of others.

Each student must complete all assignments. Class participation is also considered for semester grade. Therefore, it is important that students attend all classes, interact and ask questions. Anyone who arrives late should inform Prof. Litwin. Deadlines and accuracy are vital in the communication profession and are factored into final grades. **Missed tests may not be made up. Late assignments will be downgraded 10 points. Cell phones are off limits during class: No calls – no text messaging – no IMing. An occasional glance to check the time is acceptable. But don’t “push it.” (See below.) More than three absences will affect a student’s grade.**

Students are responsible for reading assigned chapters in ***The Public Relations Practitioner’s Playbook*** and PR terms used in class, which are in ***The ABCs of Strategic Communication***.

Your professor's personal objective is to prepare students for **their future** rather than **his** past. He is here to **HELP** – **Hear** what he says so you can be **Educated to Learn**, which will **Prepare** you for your future. You've come to Rowan University to learn. You leave here to serve.

Students should carry with them, at all times, the textbooks, a dictionary and the *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. There are a number of other books that should be part of a PR practitioner's tool kit. Among them: *Grammar Gremlins* by Don K. Ferguson and *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White. Professor Litwin will discuss other books that should be included in your professional library.

All assignments and reports must be **typed or computer printed, double spaced and correctly labeled**. Since writing is a key skill in the public relations profession, a half a grade is deducted for every grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation, typographical and/or A-P style error. We must strive for perfection. Always have someone (other than yourself) edit your copy. **Assignments may not be emailed.**

**Course Objectives (summarized):**

- Introduce students to the basic principles of public relations writing
- Introduce students to the basic tools used for public relations

**Textbook and Supplemental Reading and Class Participation:** Students are expected to read assigned chapters before class and be well prepared before coming to class. Students are encouraged to take initiative to broaden their knowledge by reading additional materials.

In addition, your participation is instrumental for not only moving the class discussion forward but also contributing to your final grade. Though attendance is required, just being present does not mean participation.

Here are some tips to improve your participation:

Prepare for class. Check BlackBoard at least one day before each class for announcements and supplementary material. **Any "readings" posted on BlackBoard or emailed should be considered important.**

- Bring your book(s) to every class, as it will be referenced during class.
- If you need clarification or want additional explanation, feel free to ask a question.

**More than three absences WILL affect a student's grade.**

**Use of cell phones, computers, PDAs, etc:**

In this class we will maintain a professional level. Use the same courtesy in class as you would in the workplace concerning the use of these devices (ringers on silent, vibrate, no calls, etc.). Because of abuse in previous classes, you may NOT use computers during class.

## ASSIGNMENT DUE NEXT CLASS (Monday, Jan. 23, 2012):

We are calling it...**Follow a Leader**. Set your sights on a person you would most like to emulate – possibly someone who has influenced you. In 250 words or less (one page – double-spaced), tell me why you admire this person and how your education can help you follow in their footsteps.

**Basic Public Relations Writing is an aggressive course that includes as many of the following as time allows:**

- Placement test
- Follow the Leader (1<sup>st</sup> assignment)
- Special Assignment (2<sup>nd</sup> assignment)
- Six-word Story
- Basic grammar
- Pitch Letter (Business Letter)
- Business Memo
- Media (PRESS) Kit (TBD)
- Media Advisory (Media Alert)
- Public Service Announcement (PSA)
- News Leads News Release – Print
- News Release – Broadcast
- News Release – Feature (print)
- Social Media Release Template
- Letter to Editor
- Photo Captions and Cut lines
- Fact Sheet
- Backgrounder
  - Historical
  - Statistical
- Editing Handouts
- Style Tests
- Fog Index [Advanced also]
- Spelling Tests
- Current Events Test
- Final Exam

**TENTATIVELY we will cover *The PR Practitioner's Playbook* in the following order:**

<b>Chapters:</b>
1...History of Public Relations
5...Basic Public Relations Writing Techniques
2...Synergy
3...Total Effort to Communicate
6...Advanced Public Relations Writing
11...Researching and Writing Speeches
15...Other Public Relations Tools
(Other chapters and outside reading as assigned)

<b>Grading for Writing Classes</b>
<b>A = 0 errors    D+ = 8 errors</b>
A- = 1 errors    D = 9 errors
B+ = 2 errors    D- = 10 errors
B = 3 errors    F = 11 and more errors
B- = 4 errors
C+ = 5 errors
C = 6 errors
C- = 7 errors

**Students are responsible for reading *Write Right* on their own as the semester progresses.**

### **Overall Grading**

A = 95-100  
A- = 94-92  
B+ = 91-88  
B = 87-84  
B- = 83-82  
C+ = 81-78  
C = 77-74  
C- = 73-72  
D+ = 71-67  
D = 66-64  
D- = 63-60  
F = 59 and below

### **Assignment Breakdown**

Placement test = 0-10%  
Writing Assignments = 50%  
Tests, Quizzes and Class Participation = 10%  
Media Kit = 0-15%  
Final Exam = 20-40% [Depending on whether we craft separate Media Kit]

**The following is university policy: Once drop-add ends, students are permitted to add a course only in cases of documented emergency. The special form (hardship form) for late schedule adjustment specifically calls for a description and attached documentation of the particular emergency in that student's case.**

**STUDENTS ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT  
PASSED BY UNIVERSITY SENATE: 5/10/05  
APPROVED BY INTERIM PROVOST: 8/25/05**

Your academic success is important. If you have a documented disability that may have an impact upon your work in this class, please contact me. Students must provide documentation of their disability to the Academic Success Center in order to receive official University services and accommodations. The Academic Success Center can be reached at 856-256-4234. The Center is located on the 3rd floor of Savitz Hall. The staff is available to answer questions regarding accommodations or assist you in your pursuit of accommodations. We look forward to working with you to meet your learning goals.

If you have a question about a class being held, call me at 856-767-7730. Best wishes for an enjoyable and successful semester!

## **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is a very serious offense. If you use any material that you did not create, you must provide attribution and copyright permission. This includes copying from the Internet. Plagiarism also includes passing off another student's work as your own or giving your work to another student. When in doubt, ask me. For Rowan's complete academic honesty policy, download the Student Information Guide from <http://www.rowan.edu/studentaffairs/infoguide> (see Academic Integrity Policy).

**Anyone caught plagiarizing will receive an F for the course. (This is a statement used in another department. We are using it for this class.)**

[Please fill out info sheet on next page and bring to first class.]

# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

## Student Information

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

College Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Primary (Home/Cell) Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary (Work) Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_

Declared Major \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Other Colleges Attended \_\_\_\_\_

Profession/Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Goal \_\_\_\_\_