Syllabus PRCM 4020 (new)

Style & Design in Public Relations Messages

**Professor:**
**Office:**
**Phone:**
e-mail:
**Office Hours:**

Prerequisites: PRCM 3040, COMM 3500, RTVF 3300, COMM 3600, 2.3 GPA, sophomore standing, PUBR major or departmental approval.

**Course Description**
Introduction to the use of style and design in public relations messages.

**Course Objectives**
Style and Design is a unique course. It involves software and online activities. The class is designed to help you become aware of software applications and implementations of online public relations activities that you will likely be asked to use in your professional life.

Style & Design incorporates traditional PR practices into technology emerging digital media and social networks. Please note, although we may talk about social media from time to time, this course’s primary focus is on the final project (of which your social media activities are only a part). The vast majority of your time will be spent using the software.

You will create a digital portfolio and practice activities in social media that may be incorporated into campaigns for your future clients. To see examples of these projects, visit PRProspects.com.

**Activities / Assignments**
- Test One - Week of Mid Semester (37th Class Day)
- Social Media - All or nothing. Do all the posts, or you don’t receive any points. You will be graded on the relevance and appropriateness of the postings as well as the correctness of the post.
  - *Begin posting :: September 1st*
  - The Loveliest Village
  - The Corner News
  - Your Blog
  - Administration & management of social networks
- Final Project - Due last week of classes. *No exceptions*. You will be graded on content, creativity, and correctness.
  - **Important Rule:** You will lose one letter grade on this project for each typo. That includes spelling, grammar and punctuation.
  - *You must keep copies of your work. The copies you turn into me will not be returned. So, keep a backup copy for yourself.*

**Total points for course = 1000** Note: No late submissions will be accepted. Late submissions of any class materials, posts, etc. will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.

**Schedule: Lectures and Tests**
• See Readings & Assignments
• Note: The final exam for this class is your final project. We will meet during the University designated final exam time for presentations and discussions of your projects.

Course Policies

This is very important:

Students must follow AU’s IT policies, including section 5.16 (see this link for details)

The consequence of not following IT policies includes losing computer access privileges. This can lead to you failing this course.

Most important to our class activities, we must not download anything onto the computers. It must be downloaded to your flash drive. Please read and comply with the rules in the link above.

Quizzes: I may give unannounced quizzes during the semester. They will cover readings and content covered in class. If I give an unannounced quiz, it is to determine whether or not you have been keeping up with class assignments. They do not count toward your final grade total listed in the above list of grades for assignments. They do serve as a reminder for me when considering offering extra credit. If the grades are poor, I won’t offer extra credit.

Conduct and Academic Dishonesty: A professional demeanor is expected at all times during presentations. Students who are disruptive or uncivil during their own or a peer’s presentation can expect a reduced score to reflect such misconduct. Misconduct may be defined in many ways, but it is especially important that you realize that misconduct is also defined as anything that suggests you are not paying attention to, and being respectful of, the presentation.

Computer Use/Conduct Policy: Don’t surf the Web while we’re in class. If I find you checking your email, looking at Facebook or any other non-class activity, in accordance with university policy, I reserve the right to have you leave class if you do not comply with this policy.

Makeup Policy: If you miss an exam, there must be an acceptable, university-approved, written excuse in order for that exam to be made up (for information regarding acceptable excuses, please consult page 85 of the Tiger Cub Student Planner). You must present your written excuse to me within one week after you return to class. Make up exams will be scheduled within two weeks from the time your excuse is received.

E-Mail Communication: The official university medium of communication is through your university Tiger Mail account. I may periodically send out messages and reminders via e-mail and you may contact me in the same manner. However, e-mail communication is limited by the following three conditions:

1) You must give me at least 24 hours to reply to your message. In other words, do not send a question about an exam at 11:00 PM, the night before the test and expect me to reply.
2) I reserve the right to ask you to see me during my office hours if your question is too complicated to be usefully addressed in e-mail.
3) Due to laws concerning confidentiality of student’s records I cannot discuss your grade in an e-mail message (or by telephone); you must see me in person.

E-mail is the best way to reach me.

Policy on Attendance: This class does not have a mandatory attendance policy. You will not receive a grade listed as “Attendance”, but you should recognize that your grade can be affected based on whether you attend the class. A direct correlation exists between good attendance and good grades. If
you do not attend class, you are still responsible for the material covered during lectures and
discussions - and assignments that may be given during class.

Class attendance cannot be stressed stronger than - you should always come to class. Do not expect any
help from your instructor for any material you miss due to any unexcused absences.

A legitimate written excuse for any absence will be taken into account regarding tests and other
exercises, presentations. The excuse must be presented to me within one week of your return to class.
Since you must actually participate to receive part of your grade, students observed sleeping, reading
newspapers, studying other subjects, talking unnecessarily, or in any other way disrupting the
classroom experience will be counted off.

**Withdrawing from the Course:** Please remember that students may withdraw (although with a W on
their transcript) until mid semester. Check with your advisor or the Registrar for information about how
to withdraw with a “W” on your transcript. Withdrawing after the date they give you requires a visit to
your advisor and the permission of the instructor and the dean of your college. Grade penalties may
apply.

**Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty is an offense that will be reported to the university’s
Academic Honesty Committee. For university policies on cheating and plagiarism, check the Tiger Cub
Student Planner under “Cheating” on pages 83-84. The complete text of the Department of History’s
Academic Honesty Code is found online at
http://www.cla.auburn.edu/history/gs/academic_honesty.htm

**Cell Phone Policy:** All cell phones, pagers, and other noise-making devices must be turned off before
coming to class. These types of distractions are extremely annoying and if such a device causes a
continuing annoyance, the offending student will be asked to leave. In addition, due to the potential for
cheating or disruptions through the use of camera phones, text messaging, or other devices, all cell
phones, cameras, PDAs, laptop computers, recorders, or other electronic devices are prohibited in all
lectures and discussion sections unless previously approved by the instructor.

Allow me to repeat this: **Phone Policy:** Turn off your cellphones. Link to Why you won’t
text in class. In accordance with university policy, I reserve the right to have you leave class
if you do not comply with this policy. Cellphone use serves as a distraction and disruption.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students needing accommodations should arrange a meeting the first week
of class. Come during office hours or email for an alternate time. Bring the Accommodation Memo and
Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. Discuss items needed in this class. If you do not have an
Accommodation Memo but need special accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for
Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT) or check the web at [12]
http://www.auburn.edu/academic/disabilities/

The Department of Communication and Journalism recognizes the importance of both
reflecting and teaching diversity. Our policy is intended to be inclusive of all
underrepresented and minority groups whatever their race, religion, national origin,
gender, age, ability or sexual orientation.

Students with special needs may benefit from services sponsored by the University. To find
out more contact the Director of Disabled Student Services, Dr. Sarah Colby Weaver, at
1234 Haley Center (334-844-2081).

Visit:  Auburn University - Program for Students with Disabilities.
For eligible students, accommodations and services are based upon the individual student’s documentation. Accommodations are also given to students based on the functional limitations his or her disability causes. Since determination is individualized, two students with the same diagnosed disability may be given different accommodations and services. The student is actively involved in the meeting to determine their accommodations.

This is Public Relations Style & Design, PRCM 4020. This is a production class. You will create content. What content?

A digital portfolio containing: newsletters, Brochures, HTML pages, Dynamic Websites, Blog, Personalized browsers, Tutorials, Video, Audio files/podcast content, and more.

This is an introductory class and will expose you to HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language), CD-ROM development, Web site development, blogging and several software packages.

How will we do this?


Software

This understanding should include the following areas:

1. General equipment and software knowledge giving you the ability to create graphics, web pages, CD-ROMs and other PR related elements and publications.
2. The basic elements of style and design.
3. Writing HTML.
4. Photoshop graphic creation.
5. Creation of multimedia tutorials.
6. Flash animation presentation of your resume.
7. Video and audio podcasts.
8. Several online software packages, including: Wordpress, Ning, Ussee, SproutBuilder and three Social Media Release builders.

Essentially, we are seeking to create a multimedia portfolio of your creations. You will also produce a video resume! You will speak and introduce yourself followed by a video screen capture of your Web site. Sixty seconds, max!

Probably most important, the course will provide an opportunity for you to create a variety of online/CD content, allowing you to express personal creativity while developing the ability to conceptualize story ideas and effectively translate these ideas into multimedia/dynamic content.

The main languages/software packages we will focus on are:

• Adobe Photoshop
• Adobe InDesign
• HTML/CSS
• SnagIt/Camtasia
• Macromedia Flash 8
• Utterz
Plainly stated: This class moves fast. Very fast. Not too fast. But, you must keep up.

**Computer Usage**

As for the computers we are using in this lab, this is very important (yes, this is a repeat in the syllabus):

Students must follow AU’s IT policies, including section 5.16 (see policies for details). The consequence of not following IT policies includes losing computer access privileges.

Most important to our class activities, we must not download anything onto the computers. It must be downloaded to your flash drive. Please read and comply with the rules in the link above.

You may also find the software we use in the DRL, Digital Resources Lab in RBD. But, please note that their software versions are newer than those in our lab. So, you need to save them as appropriate versions if you wish to edit them in our lab.

**Templates vs. Personal Creations**

In this class, we do some work from templates. Why? As an introductory class, there is not sufficient time to fully learn HTML, CSS, graphic design, multimedia, animation, and all the other areas available to you for making PR campaign material. Our goal is to familiarize you with the concepts of HTML and the software, how to work with them, how they work, how to edit - change - manipulate content.

You are allowed to use HTML and FLASH templates in this class if you give credit to the creators. This must be free/opensource content. Do not use anything proprietary. Opensource Web Design (oswd.org), for example, offers free templates. I expect to see attribution and credit given to any work that contains opensource content. Of course, you could also write your own ‘template’ and not need to give any credit to anyone but yourself. Have you seen a style of website that you like? Try to write a page that is similar to the one you like.

There are three good aspects to the use of templates, especially for PR practitioners in a small office or those working with a small budget.

1. They are excellent for learning purposes. Take them and study the HTML code. Taking something apart and putting it back together again is one of the most tried and true forms of learning.
2. Templates are a fast way to produce a site for the web, or simply for presentation purposes. Give attribution where necessary. Follow the license.
3. Templates may be purchased for a low price. Then, use the template for whatever purpose you need without having to place links and credit on the site.

**Assignments**

One variable that may have an effect on your grade is attendance. Since this class meets only once a
week for fifteen weeks, missing any classes will have an adverse effect on your ability to handle the software. Attendance is not mandatory. This is just my word of warning to you based upon past student experiences.

Class Exercises
This contains the assignments you will cover each week.

Later in the semester to help you complete your homework, we will be offering open lab hours on Sundays from 4-6pm and afternoons. I will also be in the lab each Monday & Tuesday at a little after 3:00 P.M. each day.

Lab hours are optional. However, I would strongly suggest that you utilize them. Students who do use the lab hours do better than those who do not.

Activities for PRCM 4020
The schedule below may change over time. I may add reading materials/tutorials and perhaps rearrange some of these lessons.


We’ll fill out your FERPA release form, then go to these sites and signup (where required).

- The Loveliest Village (signup)
- The Corner News (no signup,yet)
- PRblogs.org (signup)
- PROpenMic (signup)
- Linkedin (signup only if you want to)
- Poynter Online (signup)
- PRWeek US (no signup required)
- MediaBullseye.com (no signup required)
- Help A Reporter Out (HARO) (signup, but don’t respond to any queries, yet … we’ll talk about it first) For “company” in the signup form, just use Auburn University.

- This is a listserv that sends media pitches for stories from journalists to PR practitioners. The idea is for you to sign up and see how this process works. Sign up and we’ll talk about it in class. Then, perhaps - down the road - you’ll have a person to offer up as a source for these stories. Did you know that this is how the process works? Another service, ProfNet, has been doing this for years. The difference? ProfNet costs thousands. HARO is free. Hmm? Do you think that the people at ProfNet are worried? They should be. Peter Shankman’s HARO list had over 20,000 members on August 5th. He is surely way past that, now. PRNewswire’s ProfNet queries, by comparison, “are distributed via the wire up to 4,000 U.S. news organizations, e-mailed to more than 7,500 registered reporters.” (Source) Now, 86,000 reporters can see the profiles of those in ProfNet, but HARO is going to surpass the numbers receiving pitches soon (if not already).

Now, social media sites to embrace and become involved with:
- Twitter :: Students have found internships and jobs through twitter. No kidding. Read links
below for tips: (consider this, too - Journalists Using Twitter and also Newspapers that Twitter … think media relations)

- Also check out these ideas for Twitter: JournalistTweet, a list of 100+ journalists using Twitter (follow this link in your Google Reader) and a TweetUp to help a nonprofit raise funds
- 10 don’ts for PR people on social networks (by a reporter), Omar L. Gallaga in Austin, TX
- Karen Russell :: Guide to Twitter for PR students
- Darren Rowse :: Twitter for Beginners - 5 Things to Do as a New Twitter User
- Jessica Merritt :: 50 Easy ways to Improve Your Twitter Experience

Finally, research that shows why all this is so important. Key News Audiences Now Blend Online and Traditional Sources : Audience Segments in a Changing News Environment (Pew Internet Research). And, a question. Epic come true?


- 10 Video Tutorials
- Good single video tutorial
- 3rd Party critique and tips
- Microsoft’s documentation and tutorials

Week Three - Photoshop  The best place for Photoshop tutorials, the free ones, is at iTunes. Go to iTunes, then to the iTunes store, click the Podcast section, choose the Podcast Directory and search for Photoshop Tutorial. Photoshop for Digital Photographers is among the best. That link will launch iTunes, if you have it on your computer.

Here are four other examples of Web pages offering tutorials. There are tons of them out there.

- CS2 Techniques in iTunes
- Tutorials from Photoshop 7
- 15 Newest Tutorials at Good Tutorials
- PhotoshopTutorials.ws
- PhotoshopRoadmap.com

While we’re also considering our final projects, let’s visit these sites for inspiration.

- We may do this one as a warm up. Visual CV (curriculum vitae)
- PRProspects.com
- About.com - Portfolios for employment.
- About.com - Portfolio examples (more links).
- More About.com examples (more inspiration).

Week Four - Photoshop

Week Five – Photoshop, InDesign and issuu.com

- You’re going to be writing your resume, newsletters, brochures and more, right? Avoid the Doublespeak (from Dr. William Lutz, Rutgers).

Week Six – InDesign

Week Seven -- Social Media Releases: PRXBuilder and PitchEngine and Edelman StoryCrafter

Test 1
**Week Eight** - Adobe Flash, Personal Domain Preparation and Production

**Week Nine** – [52] **SproutBuilder.com** and Adobe Flash

**Week Ten** – **Second Exam** (TBD) and Final Project Discussion begins in earnest

**Week Eleven** – BrowserBob, Media Bullseye articles and more

**Week Twelve** – Utterli.com, Social Media Releases

**Week Thirteen** – Work on Final projects and more

**Week Fourteen, Work on Final projects and more**

**Week Fifteen, Deadline for your final project. Project must be turned in by the end of class.**

**Final Exam Time** -- University scheduled time

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**Blogs**


PROpenMic: [54] **http://www.propoenmic.org/**

The Loveliest Village: [55] **http://www.theloveliestvillage.org/**

Community Blogs: [56] **http://www.prblogs.org/**

The Corner News: [57] **http://www.thecornernews.com/**

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**Things to Consider**

Some comments I hope you will take to heart and accept in the friendly spirit with which I offer them.

**FIRST:** If you are interested in becoming a very able and valuable employee, this class can be invaluable. All of the other PR classes you have taken are enhanced with this software. You are in a creative discipline. Your creations are your thoughts and plans which, when developed and illustrated, can create persuasive, informative and successful PR campaigns.

This class shows you how to bring those thoughts to life in (a) presentations to clients and (b) in the implementation of those campaigns. Therefore, diving into this course content can make you stand out in the future. More important to you right now, it can make you stand out when you apply for that first job. Repeatedly, I receive e-mails from students that report that this class gave them the leg up on the competition. The choice is yours. Make the most of it.

**SECOND:** I have noticed three crucial misjudgments that some students make while taking this course. Please avoid them. They are:

1. Some students look at the content and think it is too difficult to learn and understand. That is not true. I am certain that you can do all of the things we are going to cover. Do not doubt your abilities. I know that there are young teens - boys and girls - that have mastered all of this software. In addition, they are better at it than most adults are. Believe this: you would not be in college if you could not handle this course.

2. Some students do not utilize the lab times we offer and they do not heed the warning in the next paragraph. If necessary, adjust your personal or work schedule to accommodate the lab hours. School should be your prime concern - above all others.

Be forewarned: You must apply yourself, outside of class, to the software and content we cover. If you do not apply yourself to the content and software, you will not get all you can from the course.

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3. Perhaps the most important pitfall to avoid, thinking of this class as only software and technology. In each of our exercises, you should think of how these tools may be used in public relations strategies and tactics. Focus on the communication, first. Don’t let the technology overwhelm the real focus - a better communication plan.

**What To Buy :: Domain, Hosting, and Multimedia**

There is one textbook for this class. There is also a subscription Web site and several other things you must purchase for use in the class. I always keep these costs down below the level you would have paid should we actually purchase the two textbooks we used in the past.

**Textbook:**

[1] **Groundswell**: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies (Hardcover)


[5] **Lynda.com**

Lynda.com is an award-winning provider of educational materials, including Hands-On Training™ instructional books, the Online Training Library®, CD- and DVD-based video training, and events for creative designers, instructors, students, and hobbyists.

In this class, you will create content for a digital online portfolio.

One aspect of that online portfolio is the creation of digital interviews (audio or video) for your own site and other sites. We actually have a newspaper interested in posting your content. More on that, later.

*Important* You need your own home computer, or access to a computer that you can install software on to do your homework that involves recording and editing.

**The total costs** for you will range from $110 to $135 (video). It is possible for you to obtain all of this for less, but I’m giving you the retail costs I found.

Here are the details:

**Flash Drive:** I suggest a minimum of 1 gigabyte storage for your Flash Drive. Some good brand names are SanDisk and Memorex. There are others. The main goal is to have enough storage for your projects. You will, of course, be able to use this for other purposes later on. Estimated Cost: $70.00 at Office Max, Office Depot, Wal-Mart, Best Buy, or any other store.

**Headphone/Microphone Set:** A Technics or other version of a headset with headphones and microphone. The cord must have two inputs for the computer. One for sound. One for microphone. Estimated Cost: $15.00 to 25.00 at Office Max, Office Depot, Wal-Mart, Best Buy, Radio Shack or many other stores.

**CD-ROMs:** CD-R writable CD-ROMs for your final project. You really only need about 5 or 10 of these, but you can buy a pack of 100 for less than $15.00. Consider going in on it with a classmate.

**Domain Name and Hosting Services:** One domain name can cost between $7 and $15 and the hosting may be acquired for anywhere from $7 to $10 per month. You only really need to purchase this for the
final month, but I believe you’ll want to use it after you graduate.

**Video Camera:** The minimum you need is a video camera that records full 30 frames per second video and exports to a usable format like: .avi, .wmv, .mpg

Some of you may already have this. Our videos will be simple 1 to 2 minute video interviews.

If you already have a camera (do you have one on your cellphone?) that will do that, then no need to buy anything. But, for those that don’t have a camera, here is what you need to get.

If you need a camera, I am suggesting the same video camera that Edelman PR Worldwide has purchased for their top executives. They are currently using this throughout the world for creating video for online display. They shared the camera with us, and I’m sharing the knowledge with you.

You only need the **30 minute camera** for this class, but please note - you can spend 20-30 more dollars and get a 60 minute version. The choice is yours.

**Please note:** before you see these prices, you can go in on a camera with one fellow classmate and split the cost. You’ll just have to work together to do the posts to the Loveliest Village site. Remember, it is all or nothing. So, you need to make sure you never miss a post.


This camera comes with editing software built-in. So, no need to purchase other software.

Pure Digital PSV-351 **30 Minute** Point-and-Shoot Camcorder - I’ve seen it online for as little as $89.99

[7] Same camera at Best Buy online - $105.59

[8] Same camera at Target online - $109.99

[9] Amazon has it for $129

**Suggested Purchases, but not required:**

Adobe Creative Suite 4 including Photoshop, InDesign and other programs. Estimated cost for students approximately $400.00.


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**Grading**

**Grading**

- Tests (200 points total, 100 points each) Week 7 & 10
- Social Media - All or nothing. Do all the posts, or you don’t receive any points.
  - **Begin posting :: second week of class**
  - The Loveliest Village (100 points)
  - The Corner News (100 points)
  - Your Blog (100 points)
  - Managing social networks and Media Bullseye (100 points)
- Final Project - Due on the last day of classes. No exceptions. (400 points)
  - **Important Rule:** You will lose one letter grade on this project for each typo. That includes spelling, grammar and punctuation.
  - **You must keep copies of your work. The copies you turn into me will not be returned. So, keep a backup copy for yourself.**
Total points for course = 1000

Note: No late submissions will be accepted. Late submissions of any class materials, posts, etc. will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.

At the end of the semester, your grade will be based on the percentage of total points you have earned. If you have 900-1000 points you will receive an A; 800-899, a B; 700-799, a C; 600-699, a D. Below 600 points will result in an F.

At the end of the semester, it is easy for me to look at the sites and see if you have participated. Remember, I have access to the databases (which you can’t see) and I can see the ‘real dates of your posts’ regardless of when you post.

**Final Project – 400 points** – Due Week 15. Important: if it does not launch from the autorun file we create in class, you do not receive any points. A project with one typo error in the resume loses one letter grade. Two typos – two letter grades. And so on. The Final Project will be more fully explained in the final month of the semester.

A sampling of what you will create is as follows. The Final Project is a complete CD-ROM which launches from an ‘autorun’ file. CD contains the autorun file and a personalized browser with:

- no fewer than 10 html pages – two separate template themes (complimenting one another)
- a ColorCop tutorial created with SnagIt and Movie Maker
- a :30 and :15 second PSA / podcast content – created with Utterz
- a Flash resume
- a Word ‘.doc’ resume
- a ‘.pdf’ resume
- a newsletter and brochure
- newsletter and brochures graphic

One variable that may have an effect on your grade is attendance. Since this class meets only twice a week for fifteen weeks, missing any classes will have an adverse effect on your ability to handle the software. Attendance is not mandatory. This is just my word of warning to you based upon past student experiences.

Want to see examples of some final projects? Visit [PR Prospects](#).

**PR Prospects** - where your final projects will be shared with the world

[infOpinions? » Update On Our PR Grads :: Looking To Hire? Here Are Some Candidates](#)
[infOpinions? » Student Digital Resumes and Portfolios :: Summer 2007](#)
[Marcom Blog · Something New This Spring :: Student Digital Resumes and Portfolios Online](#)
[PR Prospects » PR Prospects for you from Auburn University](#)