

Class Overview General Information**Writing for Public Relations (NCBM 108) — Summer 2014****Class Overview: General Class Information****Instructor Name:** Matt Charles**Telephone:** +1-434-203-6313**Email:** mhc8r@virginia.edu

About the Instructor: Matt Charles serves as director of media relations at the University of Virginia Darden School of Business. Before this role, Matt was director of communications and public relations at Danville (Va.) Regional Foundation. He has a background as an on-camera spokesperson and host in Los Angeles and served as a special investigator in New York City, investigating sex crimes against children. Matt is a doctoral candidate in public administration with a focus on public policy at Valdosta State University. He received his Master of Public Administration degree from Virginia Commonwealth University and B.A. from the University of Virginia. Matt completed the U.Va. Sorensen Political Leaders and Duke University Nonprofit Certificate programs and consults for nonprofits, government organizations and businesses.

Office Hours: M & W 5:00 – 7:00 PM EST**Subject Area and Catalog Number:** Public Relations NCBM 108**Year and Term:** Summer 2014 (27 May-7 July)**Class Title:** Writing for Public Relations**Level:** Certificate**Credit Type:** Noncredit

Class Description: Writing for Public Relations (NCBM 108) establishes the elements of writing for public relations. Addresses PR writing for broadcast and print media including news releases, style elements, media advisories, pitch letters, public service announcements, press conferences, brochure planning and writing, and feature article writing. Covers photography and photo captions, as well as press conferences, speechwriting and press kits.

Required Texts: The Associated Press. 2013. *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. Basic Books. ISBN-13: 978-0465082995

Additional Reading: Press releases found on www.prnewswire.com and <http://www.apple.com/pr/>.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, each student should be able to:

1. Understand the elements of and compose a press release.
2. Understand how to write public relations materials for print, radio, TV and new media (web).
3. Successfully write a feature article for placement in a print publication and public service announcement script for radio and TV.
4. Understand elements of a press kit.
5. Effectively caption photos to accompany stories pitched to media.
6. Successfully compose a speech for organization's spokesperson (usually chief executive).
7. Successfully write blurbs to accompany social media content.
8. Understand and write in AP style.
9. Write for brochures and other organizational collateral (for awareness and/or development purposes).
10. Compose concise pitch emails to media with whom you have an established relationship, as well as media with whom you wish to foster a relationship.

Assessment Components: This course utilizes a variety of assessment components to help you learn and apply public relations writing principles in a practical setting. Assessment components of the course include: discussions, assignments and final project.

Delivery Mode Expectations: Web-Based Course

Required Technical Resources and Technical Components:

1. Computer with basic audio/video output equipment
2. Internet access (broadband recommended)
3. Microsoft Word

Class Specific Information: Class Instruction and Activities

Class Requirements: Participation in our virtual classroom is required. Therefore weekly participation is expected of all students in discussion boards, assignments, and any other class-related activity. While online education classes are asynchronous, they are not correspondence or self-paced. Although only a portion of students' grades are tied to discussion, participation is MANDATORY.

Written Work, Presentation and Discussion Requirements

All written requirements — assignments, reports, etc., must be as per the assigned page limit, word-processed and double-spaced. All work, assignments, and other requirements submitted for grading must be written in APA format. All assignments are due on the date indicated in the schedule. All submissions must be complete and in its entirety on the due date. Partial submissions will not be accepted for grading. Written work submitted after the due date will be considered late. Late assignments may at the professor's discretion be graded "F." Assignments submitted early (prior to the due date) will be accepted. Students are encouraged to be creative with their submissions. Details of the assignments and project are thoroughly explained in the syllabus and the attachments. Students who do not adhere to the above "Written Work, Presentation and Discussions Requirements" will be penalized for the respective assignment.

Discussion Rubric

You are expected to engage in class discussions by posting contributions to the “Discussion Areas.” Please adhere to the discussion schedule to allow others time to comment on your work.

You are to comment on materials posted by fellow students. To earn full credit for participation, your contributions must reflect thoughtfulness — they must reference the week’s readings, information obtained from other sources (a spectrum from scholarly journals to current media coverage) and/or postings of other class members. If you reference scholarly works, please cite.

The objective of the “Discussion Area” is to demonstrate that you have read and contemplated the assigned readings and then synthesized the material with your previous knowledge and experiences. To earn credit for your posts, you must add value to the discussion. A comment such as “Excellent post” will not earn credit for the discussion.

Assignments:**Class Participation Requirements**

For each thread in the weekly discussion forum, you are required to post a response to each thread and a reply to at least two messages posted by classmates. To facilitate discussion, you are welcome to post above the minimum. Active participation for this course consists of posting your response to each discussion question, reading at least 2 other posted responses to each question; and responding back to your classmates’ work in a way that expands the discussion and/or ties in additional resources that pertain to the topic. Late postings will receive 0 points. Please maintain common courtesy and decorum in posts. Your weekly participation grade will be awarded as follows:

2 Points

Student responded to each assigned discussion question and to two classmates’ responses to each assigned discussion question.

Comments/questions responded to the discussion question.

Comments or questions significantly enhanced the quality of discussion, such as tying in current events and readings from outside of the class.

Comments provided constructive feedback to classmates.

1 Point

Student responded to an assigned discussion question to the discussion board, but missed one reply to a classmate.

Comments/questions displayed, at the least, a minimal response to the discussion question.

Comments or questions, at the minimum, enhanced the quality of discussion through offering a fresh insight.

Comments/questions reflected at least minimally on some classmates' postings before responding.

0 Points

Student did not respond to a posted question whether or not posting responses to classmates.

Student's response to a posted question did not respond to the discussion topic.

Practical Exercises and Projects

The practical exercises and projects will pull from the text, discussions, outside readings that student's reference, discussions and any other material covered in class. The expectation is that students read all assigned materials.

Evaluation Standards and Assessments: Meaning	Percentage Weight
Class Participation (Discussion)	30%
Compose Press Release (2)	30%
Final Project: Writing for PR Campaign	40%
Total	100%

Resources and Policies:

Technical Specifications: Computer Hardware:

- Computer with basic audio/video output equipment
- Internet access (broadband recommended)
- Microsoft Word

Technical Support Contacts:

- Login/Password: scpshelpdesk@virginia.edu
- UVaCollab: collab-support@virginia.edu
- BbCollaborate (Elluminate) Support: <http://support.blackboardcollaborate.com>

U.Va. SCPS Grading Policies: Courses carrying a School of Continuing and Professional Studies subject area use the following grading system: A+, A, A-; B+, B, B-; C+, C, C-; D+, D, D-; F. S (satisfactory) and U (unsatisfactory) are used for some course offerings. For noncredit courses, the grade notation is N (no credit). Students who audit courses receive the designation AU (audit). The symbol W is used when a student officially drops a course before its completion or if the student withdraws from an academic program of the University. Please [visit SCPS Grades](#) for more information.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Instructors establish attendance and participation requirements for each of their courses. Class requirements, regardless of delivery mode, are not waived due to a student's absence from class. Instructors will require students to make up any missed coursework and may deny credit to any student whose absences are excessive. Instructors must keep an attendance record for each student enrolled in the course to document attendance and participation in class.

University Email Policies: Students are expected to check their official U.Va. email addresses on a frequent and consistent basis to remain informed of University communications, as certain communications may be time sensitive. Students who fail to check their email on a regular basis are responsible for any resulting consequences.

University of Virginia Honor System: All work should be pledged in the spirit of the Honor System at the University of Virginia. The instructor will indicate which assignments and activities are to be done individually and which permit collaboration. The following pledge should be written out at the end of all quizzes, examinations, individual assignments and papers: "I pledge that I have neither given nor received help on this examination (quiz, assignment, etc.)". The pledge must be signed by the student. For more information please visit <http://www.virginia.edu/honor>.

Special Needs: It is the policy of the University of Virginia to accommodate students with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws. Any SCPS student with a disability who needs accommodation (e.g., in arrangements for seating, extended time for examinations, or note-taking, etc.), should contact the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC) and provide them with appropriate medical or psychological documentation of his/her condition. Once accommodations are approved, it is the student's responsibility to follow up with the instructor about logistics and implementation of accommodations. Accommodations for test taking should be arranged at least 14 business days in advance of the date of the test(s). Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the SDAC: 434-243-5180/Voice, 434-465-6579/Video Phone, 434-243-5188/Fax. Further policies and statements available: [U.Va. Department of Student Health](#)

For further policies and statements about student rights and responsibilities, please see [U.Va Website](#) (<http://www.scps.virginia.edu/audience/students>)