



**DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

*Division of State Fire Marshal  
Bureau of Fire Standards & Training*

**Public Information Officer**

**Title: Master Syllabus**

**Date: October 20, 2016**

<b>Course Title</b>	Public Information Officer
<b>Course Number</b>	FFP2706, BFST2706. ATPC2706
<b>Prerequisite(s)</b>	None
<b>Revision Date</b>	October 20, 2016
<b>College Credit Recommendation</b>	This course has a college recommendation of 3 credits.
<b>Continuing Education Units (CEU's)</b>	40 hours towards instructor and inspector certification renewal.
<b>Class Days/Time</b>	Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
<b>Instructional Supervisor</b>	Name: Dr. Barbara Klingensmith Email: <a href="mailto:Barbara.Klingensmith@myfloridacfo.com">Barbara.Klingensmith@myfloridacfo.com</a>
<b>Program Specialist Contact Info</b>	Name: Bill Yonce Email: <a href="mailto:Bill.Yonce@myfloridacfo.com">Bill.Yonce@myfloridacfo.com</a>
<b>Class Location</b>	Florida State Fire College
<b>Course Description</b>	This course prepares the student to serve effectively as an organizational spokesperson, according to current practices in the profession of public relations and numerous examples from the fire service. Particular emphasis will be placed on case studies in crisis communications and the role of the PIO in the incident command system.
<b>Student Learning Outcomes</b>	After the successful completion of this course, the student will be able to do the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the roles, functions, and key terms of the news media</li> <li>2. Identify laws and ethics applying to the media.</li> <li>3. Define and discuss news and the different types of news.</li> <li>4. Identify the different types of media and their needs.</li> <li>5. Identify what should be in a media policy.</li> <li>6. Identify why “no comment” should not be used.</li> <li>7. Identify problems associated with public speaking.</li> <li>8. Identify the components of an interview and areas of concern.</li> <li>9. Identify potential traps for the PIO.</li> <li>10. Describe proactive media events and the role of the media in catastrophes.</li> <li>11. Discuss the role of the PIO in high-profile incidents.</li> </ol>
<b>Required Textbook</b>	<i>Public Information Officer, Brady Publishing – Pearson/Prentice Hall, Phil Politano. ISBN-13: 978-0-13-171923-1 or ISBN-10: 0-13-171923-8</i>
<b>Required Materials</b>	Area to set up media event. Microphones.

<b><i>Method of Instruction</i></b>	Classroom
<b><i>Grading</i></b>	Passing 70%
<b><i>Certification(s)</i></b>	
<b><i>Attendance Policy</i></b>	You are required to attend all sessions of the course and complete all pre-course assignments. Failure to appear in class for a scheduled activity will be considered an absence. Students are allowed to miss 10% of the class and still receive credit. There are no makeup sessions.
<b><i>Academic Integrity</i></b>	Academic integrity is crucial to the learning community and indicates respect for the college, the instructor, the course, your classmates and yourself. Any violation of this trust, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, or using or having any content of an un-administered test, will result in immediate dismissal from the course. Under Florida Statute 633, any student dismissed for academic dishonesty can be refused acceptance for any course administered by FSFC.
<b><i>Students with Disabilities</i></b>	Any student who has a permanent or temporary disability that may require a reasonable accommodation to participate in the course must present documentation of the disability and requested accommodation no later than the beginning of the course.
<b><i>Emergency Evacuation Policy</i></b>	Occupants of buildings on the Florida State Fire College campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building.</li> <li>• Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.</li> <li>• If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the instructor on the first day of class.</li> <li>• In the event of an evacuation, follow the guidance of the instructor.</li> <li>• Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by Florida State Fire College personnel to do so.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Requesting Emergency Care</i></b>	Any request for emergency care should be initiated by calling “911” from any phone on campus of the Florida State Fire College. Phones are located in each classroom. Additionally, in the event of any emergency, immediately contact an instructor or staff member.
<b><i>Critical Event Procedures</i></b>	<b>Severe Weather</b> – there is a lightning detection system on campus which has an audible 15 second blast of an air horn. If you are outside, please follow your instructor or move to the closest permanent building. Once the threat is over, there will be three 5 second blasts of the signal.  <b>Security</b> – During the daytime, security is handled by full time faculty and staff. There are security guards on duty in the evenings and weekends.

	<p>Please comply with the requests made of security officers. Failure to do so can result in removal from campus.</p> <p><b>Student Badges</b> – You will be issued a badge to be worn anytime you are on campus.</p>
<i>Enabling Objectives</i>	<p>Given information from discussion and reading materials, the student will perform the following objectives to a written test accuracy of at least 70% and meet the applicable job performance requirements of NFPA 1035 (2010).</p> <p><b><u>Chapter 1: The Media</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe how the news media operates as a business.</li> <li>2. List and discuss various job functions within the news media.</li> <li>3. Discuss different media needs.</li> <li>4. List the “five fundamental truths” of effective media relations.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Chapter 2: Ethics, the News Media, and the Law</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define ethics and discuss its impact on media activities.</li> <li>2. Discuss the impact of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) on media relations.</li> <li>3. Discuss the impact of the Privacy Act on media relations.</li> <li>4. Discuss the impact of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) on media relations.</li> <li>5. Discuss the impact of the First Amendment on media relations.</li> <li>6. Define libel and discuss its impact on media relations.</li> <li>7. Define slander and discuss the impact on media relations.</li> <li>8. Discuss the concept of privacy and its impact on media relations.</li> <li>9. Define retraction and discuss its impact on media relations.</li> <li>10. Define correction and discuss its impact on media relations.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Chapter 3: What is News?</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define news.</li> <li>2. List three types of news.</li> <li>3. Discuss examples of each type of news and its impact on media relations.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Chapter 4: The Types and Needs of the Media</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define print media and list the needs that are specific to this media type.</li> <li>2. Define radio media and list the needs that are specific to this media type.</li> <li>3. Define television media and list the needs that are specific to this media type.</li> <li>4. Explain how the media and the Internet interact.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Chapter 5: Create a Policy for Dealing With the Media and Follow It</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the purpose of a media policy.</li> <li>2. List the components of a media policy.</li> </ol>

3. Define local media.
  4. Discuss methods to deal with national versus local media.
  5. List common components of a press release.
- Chapter 6: Why “No Comment” Is an Unacceptable Response**
1. Explain how television and other entertainment outlets have influenced the attitudes of law enforcement, EMS, and fire department personnel toward the media.
  2. Explain how “no comment” affects your side of the story.
  3. Explain the link between “no comment” and suspicion.
  4. Explain the link between “no comment” and assumptions about your ability or desire to answer questions.
  5. Supply possible alternatives to the “no comment” response.
- Chapter 7: Public Speaking and Its Associated Problems**
1. Define social phobia.
  2. Define specific phobia.
  3. List phobias that are associated with public speaking.
  4. Explain why a reporter does not want you to be too “polished”.
  5. List techniques to lessen tension during an interview.
  6. Explain how changes in the reporter’s line of questioning can affect the interview.
- Chapter 8: The Interview**
1. List the five Ws and the H of an interview.
  2. Explain the golden rule: “Stay in the box.”
  3. Give examples of “box components” for front –line personnel.
  4. Give examples of “box components” for a company officer or EMS supervisor.
  5. Give examples of “box components” for an incident commander or a fire chief.
  6. Explain how certifications can become problematic at an incident scene.
  7. Explain why deferring to another source is a good idea.
  8. List and explain tips for a successful interview.
- Chapter 9: Traps to Avoid**
1. Explain why only factual information should be conveyed.
  2. Describe “talking for talking’s sake.”
  3. Explain the concept of “hearsay.”
  4. Explain the dangers of speculation.
  5. Explain the concepts of “off the record” and “not for attribution”.
  6. Explain the concept of “stay on message”.
  7. Explain why jargon should be avoided.
- Chapter 10: Role Reversal**
1. List several types of proactive media events.
  2. Explain the benefits of these types of activities.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Explain the role of the media in catastrophic events and public notification.</li> <li>4. Explain the role of the public information officer in marketing.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Chapter 11: High-Profile Incidents</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the term high-profile incident.</li> <li>2. Explain the organizational impact of high-profile incidents.</li> <li>3. Explain the role of the media in high-profile incidents.</li> </ol>
<i>Practical Applications</i>	<p><b><u>The student shall successfully demonstrate the below JPR's of NFPA 1035.</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disseminate information to the media, given news release or media advisory, characteristics of local media including deadlines, departmental policies, and methods available to reach media, so that, prior to the deadline, the information reaches the media in a form usable to each specific local medium.</li> <li>2. Write news releases, given incident information, departmental policies, and news release format, so that the news releases are accurate, pertinent, and concise.</li> <li>3. Write a media advisory, given information to be disseminated, media advisory format, and departmental policy, so that the media advisories are accurate, pertinent, and concise.</li> <li>4. Coordinate a press conference for local media, given an event or issue, local media characteristics, methods available for reaching media, and departmental policies on press conferences, so that a site is obtained, desired media are notified, a press conference agenda is established, a media information package is produced, and participants in the press conference are notified.</li> </ol>