

# COURSE SYLLABUS



## I. Course Title:

### The Practical PIO Course

## II. Course Description

The course focuses on the relationship between police and the media with a specific emphasis on dealing with the media using a practical "hands-on" approach. The course will provide participants with a systematic approach to decision making in media relations. Class discussions will be extensively utilized to develop the nature and function of the news media in modern society, changes in the media from a historical perspective, how the police and the media view each other in the context of their respective functions, various legal and ethical issues which affect the police/media relationship and how to plan for and deal with the media in crisis situations. Participants will conduct "live" press briefings, participate in a "talk show" program and prepare/conduct an interview dealing with a crisis or "bad news" situation. The course will provide "instant feedback" through participant review of their performance via video tape following an on-camera exercise. For TCSO Employees, there will be a local media "follow-along" where the student will pair up with a local news reporter and photographer and watch how they turn a daily story.

## III. Target Population

Participants who are willing to explore/discuss the complex and changing relationship between the police and the media within the context of American society as well as those who have or may have media responsibilities within their departments, now or in the future.

**IV. Priority Course Objectives:** Upon successful completion of this course, the participant will be able to:

1. List a minimum of five media and police stereotypes and discuss these from the perspective of both the police and the reporter.
2. List four similarities between the qualities of today's journalist and today's police professional.
3. Identify and discuss the four functions of the news media and its' role in modern society as well as identify/discuss current media trends, including social media.
4. List, describe and utilize seven steps to successfully dealing with the media relative to interview preparation.
5. Define "Message Creation" in terms of an media encounter. Define "Communications Objective" as it relates specifically to an interview.

6. Define and discuss the differences between the following terms:
  - a. On the Record
  - b. Off the Record
  - c. Background Information
7. List, discuss and utilize three appropriate elements of control to be implemented during a press conference/briefing.
8. Identify and discuss six techniques for avoiding and countering potential media "traps" and pitfalls.
9. List, discuss and utilize the five components of an effective press briefing.
10. List and describe at least five steps to be undertaken in pre-crisis planning.
11. List, describe and utilize techniques for providing information to the media during a crisis event in a systematic, logical, controlled and effective manner.

## **V. Course Topics**

1. Course introduction, objectives and explanation of requirements.
2. News Briefings and Conferences with emphasis on message creation
3. Trends and functions of the media including use of social media.
4. The power of the press and ethical issues with and in the media
5. Crisis pre-planning and incident management
6. Seven steps to successful media interviews
7. Media interview pitfalls
8. Analysis of media issues in current events, particularly related to law enforcement
9. The assembly, analysis and release of information during a crisis or "bad news" event
10. Discussion of an effective written media policy.
11. The importance and role of the Public Information Officer

## VII. Course Exercises and Written Requirements

Participants will be required to attend all class meetings and complete the following graded exercises:

1. **LIVE TALK SHOW.** Appear on a "live" talk show which will be taped. This appearance will be "one-on-one" or "face-to-face" with the instructor acting as the host.
2. **LIVE "REMOTE " INTERVIEW.** Represent your department in a "remote" interview where you are in a different location than the reporter asking questions. (Split TV screen interview)
3. **ONE-ON-ONE TAPED INTERVIEW.** Answer questions from an individual reporter on a topic or incident which affects your agency.
4. **NEWS CONFERENCE.** Prepare and conduct a taped press briefing, within specified time limits, to include a question and answer session by media role players, on a significant and visible media event.

### 5. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Students will choose one of the following options:

- A. Create or update a Media Policy for your agency. Use the IACP Model Media policy and Concept paper as a guide. **If your agency does not have a Media Policy, you should choose this option.**
- B. Create a Social Media Policy for your agency. Use the IACP Model Social Policy and Concept paper as a guide.
- C. Complete an Agency Media Guide which includes basic information for officers and the media. It generally contains a mission statement, lists what information is releasable and non-releasable, discusses access at scenes, covers ridealong programs and provides important phone contacts. This document is usually a small, handy colorful brochure. You may also do a brochure for social media use in your agency.
- D. Conduct a CASE STUDY (an in-depth analysis) of a "high profile" event within your agency which drew media attention. Focus on what was done well, what was not and what could be done better if a similar situation arises in the future. Base your analysis on information from class lectures, discussions and published material. Attach media articles, TV clips or news releases if possible.

Written presentations MUST be double spaced, with appropriate bibliography. They should not exceed five pages, not including the actual policy, without prior approval from instructor .

## VIII. Method of Course Evaluation and Grading Scale/Criteria

1. The assignment of values for the graded exercises are as follows:

a. Talk Show Exercise	10%
b. News Conference	20%
c. "Remote"	15%
d. "One-on-One" Interview	15%
e. Written assignment: Media Policy/Social Policy/ Brochure Media Case Analysis/ International Review of Media Relations in Home Country	30%
f. Law Enforcement and the Media in movies (attendance at showing)	5%
g. Attendance and Active Course Participation	5%

**Students are expected to attend all classes unless absences are cleared in advance with the Instructor.**

In all cases, the instructor will provide specific comments and evaluations on all course work. Additionally there will be opportunities for one-on-one participant/instructor evaluations.

The course grading will be based on a standard collegiate scoring system where A+ = 100-98, A = 97-94, A- = 93- 90, B+ = 89 -87, B = 86 -83, B- = 82 -80, C+ = 79 -77, C = 76- 73, C- = 72- 70, D+ = 68-67, D + 66-63, D- = 62-60 and F = below 60.

## IX. Course Materials

Each participant will be provided with notebooks including all applicable class materials.

## X. Course Resource Materials

1. Goldberg, Bernard, Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News, Washington, DC: Regenery Publishing, Inc. 2002.

2. Goldberg, Bernard, Arrogance: Rescuing America from the Media Elite. New York, NY , Warner Books, 2003.

3. The Newseum, Running Toward Danger: Stories Behind the Breaking News of 9/11. Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002.
4. Moose, Charles and Charles Fleming, Three Weeks in October: The Manhunt for the Serial Sniper, New York, NY, Dutton, 2003.
5. Garrels, Anne, Naked in Baghdad: The Iraq War as Seen by NPR's Correspondent Anne Garrels, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003.
6. Leonard Downie Jr. and Robert G. Kaiser, The News about News: American Journalism in Peril, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2002
7. Harper, Christopher, And that's the way it will be: news and information in a digital world. New York, New York University Press, 1998
8. Campbell, Richard, 60 Minutes and the News: A Mythology for Middle America. Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1991
9. Fallows, James, Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy. New York, New York: Pantheon Press, 1996.
10. Fink, Conrad, Media Ethics. Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Simon and Schuster, 1995.
11. Jones, Clarence, Winning With the News Media. Marathon, Florida: Video Consultants, Inc. 1999.
12. Fenton, Tom, Bad News: The Decline of Reporting, the Business of News, and the Danger to Us All, Regan Books, 2005.
13. Stewart, Sally, Media Training 101: A Guide to Meeting the Press, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004.

## **XII. PERIODICALS AND WEB SITES**

*Quill*--Publisher-Society of Professional Journalists; published monthly; [www.spj.org](http://www.spj.org)

*CJR* (Columbia Journalism Review)--Publisher-Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism; published bi-monthly; [www.cjr.org](http://www.cjr.org)

*The News Media and the Law*--Publisher-The Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press; published quarterly; [www.rcfp.org](http://www.rcfp.org)

The Poynter Institute (A school for journalists, future journalists and teachers of journalists).  
[www.poynter.org](http://www.poynter.org)