



Community Media Workshop  
[www.newstips.org](http://www.newstips.org)

at Columbia College Chicago  
600 South Michigan Avenue Chicago IL 60605-1996 (Walk-in: 619 S. Wabash, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
312-694-6400 fax: 312-369-6404

## Professional Media Relations Course Outline January-February 2009

### Week 1: Strategy: advance mission, strengthen organization

Friday, Jan. 23, 9 a.m. to noon

*Topics covered:*

- Introductions & goals of the workshop
- Communications strategy: Why communications? Why media?
- How to find & tell stories that advance your mission and strengthen your organization

*Guest:*

Carolyn Grisko, president, Carolyn Grisko & Associates

*Homework:*

- Find and produce (written, audio, or video) 1 story that exemplifies your work
- Review strategy plan worksheet with a co-worker or supervisor; submit 1-2 **written** programmatic or fundraising goals for the next 6-12 months

### Week 2: Telling Your Stories

Friday, Jan. 30, 9 a.m. to noon

*Topics covered:*

- Two stories your organization must have ready right now: Who are we? and Why are we here? (elevator pitches)
- Building relationships with reporters
- Get it on paper (or screen!): basics of writing an advisory, release, or pitch letter

*Homework:*

- Write an advisory, release or succinct pitch letter about an upcoming event or newsworthy program of your organization.

### Week 3: Tools of the trade: Writing & Pitching

Friday, Feb. 6, 9 a.m. to noon

*Topics covered:*

- Review homework
- Writing: letters to the editor & op eds
- Writing for the Web
- Pitching and press lists (media guides distributed)
- Incorporating online into your communications
- Staging Media Events

*Homework:*

- Revise your advisory, release or pitch letter written the previous week

(over)

**Week 4: Spokesperson skills and broadcast news**

**Friday, Feb. 13, 9 a.m. to noon**

*Wanda Wells, guest instructor*

*Topics covered:*

- Working with broadcast news
- Effective interview skills
- On-camera practice and critique

*Homework:*

- Practice pitching your story in front of a mirror

**Week 5: Putting it all together: the pitch**

**Friday, Feb. 20, 9 a.m. to noon**

*Topics covered:*

- Pitch working journalists your story

*Guests:*

- Curtis Black, Newstips
- Mark Brown, Chicago Sun-Times
- James Janega, Chicago Tribune
- Natalie Moore, Chicago Public Radio
- Dawn Reiss, freelancer (& president, Chicago Headline Club)

**Lead Trainers:**

Thom Clark, CMW President, 312-369-6401, [thom@newstips.org](mailto:thom@newstips.org)

Gordon Mayer, CMW VP, 312-369-7722, [gordon@newstips.org](mailto:gordon@newstips.org)

Diana Pando, CMW Senior Trainer, 312-369-7783, [Diana@newstips.org](mailto:Diana@newstips.org)

Homework is to be uploaded to <http://nonprofitcommunicators.ning.com/group/pmrfolk> by NO LATER THAN noon Thursday (so we can compile them for you all to review)

Logistical questions: contact Diana