Multimedia Writing

JOU3109C / 3 credits

Summer C 2018

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Contact

The best way to contact me is through the Canvas email system. During the week, I usually respond to emails within 48 hours. I am also available to meet by video chat or phone. Email me to arrange a time to chat. If Canvas is down, and you need to ask a question, feel free to send your question to my email address.

I encourage you to reach out if you need clarification on assignment instructions, readings/lectures, how your writing will be assessed, the feedback I provide you, or the material you have learned.

Course Format

This course is delivered online in an asynchronous format. In other words, we have no scheduled meeting time. This can be convenient for you, but it also means that it is absolutely essential for you to be an organized, motivated student. The course will be managed through eLearning. You can access the course by logging into eLearning at http://elearning.ufl.edu.

Required Texts

- Rich, Carole (2016). Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method. 8th edition. Cengage Learning.

- Associated Press (AP) Stylebook (2016 edition or newer).

  The AP Stylebook is published each year in the spring. Each edition includes new terms, changes in previous rules (such as changing from e-mail to email), and new guidelines for social media use. You may purchase the book in paperback or as an interactive e-book. To purchase the interactive e-book, 2017 edition, go to:

http://www.apstylebook.com. The 2016 AP Stylebook can be purchased on amazon.com.

- Other readings and resource materials are included in each module.

Recommended Texts

- A grammar book such as:

  - Kessler, L. & McDonald, D. (2016). *When Words Collide*. Edition: 9th (You may use an earlier edition.)

  - Or, Straus, J. (2014). *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation*. Edition: 11th

- Websites for grammar assistance:

  - Purdue Online Writing Lab (Grammar): https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/

- The Associated Press recommends *Webster's New World College Dictionary*. You do not need to buy the dictionary but use either of these sites for looking up the definitions of words: http://websters.yourdictionary.com/ or https://www.merriam-webster.com/

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

Prerequisite: ENC 1102 and one of the following: MMC 1009 or MMC 2604 or PUR 3000, with minimum grade of C.

Course Description

Multimedia Writing introduces news and public relations writing and the use of multimedia tools in gathering and disseminating information. Students learn how to use multimedia tools for journalism work, interviewing techniques, AP style and the elements that make a story newsworthy.

Purpose of Course

Multimedia Writing is designed to help you become a more effective communicator and to help you explore different kinds of writing activities that are part of jobs in communications. You will write on deadline, work on your own stories, and publish online – all enabling you to develop your skill set and your portfolio.

Course Goals and Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:
- Write a résumé and cover letter for a specific communications-related internship or job.
- Write clearly and accurately.
- Write news stories.
- Write news-feature stories.
- Write a personality profile.
- Write news releases.
- Conduct interviews in person and via phone and Skype.
- Take notes during an interview.
- Pitch story ideas.
- Create and develop a personal blog.
- Take photographs and write captions.
- Use social media to create a professional personal brand.
- Use AP style.

How This Course Relates to the Student Learning Outcomes in the College of Journalism and Communications

Multimedia Writing provides you with the opportunity to develop and practice skills that are part of the core competencies of all majors in the college – conducting effective research, conducting interviews, writing in different media formats, developing a professional online brand, taking effective photographs, and demonstrating the ability to write with correct grammar and word use and using AP style.

Teaching Philosophy

This course was designed to encourage you to actively engage with your classmates, through peer critiques and discussion, and with the material, by having you take notes during a video interview and then write a story. I want you to be able to demonstrate communications skills that will help you evaluate your career plans, practice for the kind of internship and job interview activities you may have to do, and create content for your portfolio.

Instructional Methods

The course is designed to include a variety of approaches. Each module includes at least one video lecture. In some modules, guest speakers join us for lectures, and in

some modules, we go on location, such as to the Innovation News Center and the Career Resource Center. Each module includes reading assignments and activities, such as a practice writing assignment, a quiz or a peer discussion. I hope you will take advantage of working with classmates to provide and receive critique that will help you improve your writing. Each module also includes a major writing assignment, which must be completed on deadline. Some of these major assignments can become part of your professional portfolio. The deadline assignments are similar to the kind of task you might be given as part of a job or internship application process.

POLICIES

Deadlines

You are responsible for completing numerous assignments throughout the semester. Do not let yourself fall behind! Deadlines are critical for communications professionals. You are expected to submit all assignments on time. Deadlines are given in Eastern Standard Time.

Late assignments will only be accepted in cases of documented emergencies, family emergencies, and technical issues, on a case-by-case basis. Any request to make-up an assignment due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from UF's e-learning Support Services or UF's HUB Office when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. **You MUST e-mail me, the instructor, within 24 hours of the assignment being due if you wish to request a make-up of an assignment.** Assignments that I have approved for late submission will be assigned a new due date. You must complete the assignment by the new due date; otherwise you will receive either a 10-point deduction or 10 percent deduction (for assignments less than or greater than 100 points) per day late.

You are responsible for checking to see whether your work has been submitted to Canvas. After you submit your work, information about your submission will appear. "I thought I had submitted the assignment," is not an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline.

Course Technology

You will need reliable **Internet access and a reliable computer with Microsoft Word** (or other word-processing software that can generate a .doc or .docx file). If you

do not submit your work through eLearning in the requested format (typically as a Word document), you will receive a zero on the assignment.

Check to see whether you have access to Microsoft Word 2016 through UF Apps (https://info.apps.ufl.edu/)

Submitting work and receiving feedback

You will submit your assignments in eLearning, and I will provide feedback meant to encourage you and help you improve. You are future communications professionals, and I have very high standards for your work. You will likely have a lot of errors at first; it's part of learning this style of writing. **You are strongly encouraged to ask me any questions you might have or talk about any struggles you experience. Don't wait!** The longer you put off getting help with the course, the harder it is to get back on track. **If you have specific questions or concerns about a grade on an assignment, discussion post, quiz, etc., you must email me within a week of the assignment being due.**

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Any attempt to represent the work, ideas, or writing of someone else as your own is considered plagiarism and will result in failure of the assignment, and potentially of the course. Willful and blatant incidents of plagiarism will be handed over to the Office of the Dean to be punished in accordance with University Policy. All work submitted for this class must be your original work. You may not reuse assignments created for other purposes, including other courses, and you may not use work created by someone else. When you use information (including images) from any source, you should cite the content appropriately. If you have any questions regarding this policy, ask me! "But I didn't know..." is not an excuse.

Notifications

I will communicate regularly with the class and with you individually as needed. It is important that you log into Canvas daily to check for new announcements as well as check your Canvas email and review the feedback I have provided on your work. You may set up alerts to forward messages directly to your UF email address. To adjust your notification settings in Canvas, follow these guidelines.

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats.

Not sure of netiquette guidelines? Review guidelines here: http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/

GETTING HELP

For issues with technical difficulties for eLearning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk (A.K.A. UF's Hub and E-learning Support Services) at:

 Email: helpdesk@ufl.edu (or) learning-support@ufl.edu
 Phone: (352) 392-HELP (4357)
 FAQs for Students: https://kb.helpdesk.ufl.edu/FAQs/E-Learning

Any request to make-up an assignment due to technical issues **MUST** be accompanied by the ticket number received from UF's e-learning Support Service or UF's HUB when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. **You MUST e-mail me within 24 hours of the technical difficulty or emergency if you wish to request a make-up.**

Other resources are available at http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints to submit a complaint.

GRADING POLICIES

Your grade in the course is based on completing several module activities. For most modules, you will take a quiz or have a practice activity based on the reading assignments and the video lectures.

Each module includes a major assignment. Such assignments include writing a news story based on information you receive, listening to an interview and writing a news release, and creating your own blog. **Some of the module assignments will be completed on a timed deadline. Once you start the assignment, you will have a certain amount of time to complete it.**

The assignment for each module will be explained in that module, and you will receive a rubric to provide a personal checklist as you complete the task. **Please ask questions if you need clarification on the assignment or how you will be graded**.

Accuracy is a key component in each writing assignment. Accuracy of facts and careful editing of your own work are important qualities to set you apart from other writers. To help encourage careful editing of your own work, each written assignment will be evaluated on correctness of grammar and word use. **Beginning with Module 3, part of your grade will be based on correct use of AP style, and you will receive coaching and resources to assist you with AP style. Beginning with Module 4, points will be deducted for each fact error you make. Examples of fact errors include incorrect information, misspelling a proper noun and having an incorrect number. Each fact error is -20 points.**

In working on your assignments, be sure to allocate time to carefully proofread your work. Some strategies to assist you in editing your work include:
- Reading your work aloud.

- Reading your work backwards (last line on the last page to first line on the first page) to catch misspellings/typos.
- Highlighting each proper noun and number to remind you to check each for accuracy.
- When you use a comma, ask yourself what the rule is for the comma's use to make sure a comma, in fact, is needed.

Assignments

Quizzes	88 points
Practice Writing Assignments & Peer Reviews	170 points
Discussion Boards	65 points
Timed/Major Writing Assignments	1,135 points
Total Points	1,458

Grading Scale

A	95 – 100	B -	80 – 82	D+	67 – 69
A -	90 – 94	C+	77 – 79	D	63 – 66
B+	87 – 89	C	73 – 76	D -	60 – 62
B	83 – 86	C -	70 – 72	E	59 and below

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module	Week(s)	Topic	Assignment
1	May 14 – 19 Purchase textbooks by Friday, May 18 for Mod. 2 readings	Setting Your Goals	Introduce yourself; Answer 4 career questions

2	May 20 – 26	Writing Résumé and Cover Letter	Résumé and cover letter for communications-related internship or job
3	May 27 – June 2	Writing Hard-News Stories	Write news story based on information provided
4	June 3 – 9	Writing News-Feature Stories	Write feature story based on information provided
5	June 10 – 16	Interviewing & Writing Personality Profile	Write personality profile
6	June 17 – June 23	Blogging Part 1	Set up blog and begin blogging
7	June 17 – 23 Summer Break June 25 - 29	Taking Effective Photos	Take photos based on assigned topics and write captions
8	July 1 - 7	Writing News-Feature Stories with Multiple Sources Part One	Write a news-feature story about an event based on interviews you listen to.
9	July 8 – 14	Writing News-Feature Stories with Multiple Sources Part Two	Write an environmental story based on interviews you listen to
10	July 15 – 28	Writing an Environmental, Health, Science or Technology Story	Pitch EHST story. Conduct interviews and write an EHST story with publication potential.
11	July 15 - 25	Writing a News Releases	Write a news release based on information you receive
12	July 30 – Aug. 4	Writing a News Release for a Client	Write a news release following a client's specifications
13	Aug. 5 – 11	Blogging Part 2	Demonstrate your blogging skills based on maintaining a blog since Module 6

Important Dates (See Summer C 2018 Dates/Deadlines)

Classes begin: May 14

Withdrawal from all courses with no fee liability: May 15
Memorial Day: May 28
Summer Break: June 25 – 29
Independence Day: July 4
Drop deadline (W assigned): Aug. 3
Classes End: Aug. 10
Final Grades Available: Aug. 15

Disclaimer

This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.