

Writing for Mass Communication (MMC 2100) Spring Semester 2016

COURSE SYLLABUS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Lead instructor: Professor Rob Marino
Email: through Canvas

Lab instructor: Ms. Erin Jester
Email: through Canvas
Lab instructor: Mr. Sean McCrory
Email: through Canvas
Lab Instructor: Mr. David Moore
Email: through Canvas

Course structure

MMC 2100 is divided into 12 Modules with 10 written assignments comprising the majority of your grade (**see Course Grading). You will have a minimum of ONE week to complete the work in each module.

Each module will open at 12:01 a.m. on Monday and close at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday. In some modules, you will have timed assignments – meaning you will have a specific amount of time in which to complete the assignment.

Virtual Office Hours: *****(all through Conferences, Canvas)**

MONDAYS, 9-11 p.m.

TUESDAYS, 9-11 p.m.

WEDNESDAYS, 9-11 p.m.

SUNDAYS, 9-11 p.m.

***While this is an online course, it is strongly suggested that you attend virtual office hours each week. Either Professor Marino or one of the three lab instructors, Ms. Jester or Mr. McCrory or Mr. Moore, will be moderating each of the FOUR office hours during the week to provide immediate feedback on each assignment.

In fact, we strongly suggest you work on your written assignments, particularly timed ones on deadline, during our office hours. By being enrolled in this class, you have access to any of the FOUR weekly office hour sessions.

You should also be checking the MMC 2100 portal on Canvas several times each week. All course material will be available there: written assignments, tests and quizzes and textbook exercises as well as course handouts.

Additionally, you should be checking your primary email every few days. Professor Marino and your lab instructor will be emailing weekly course updates.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

MMC 2100 is a pre-professional course designed to promote fundamental instruction and practice in writing as a basis for upper division courses in such areas as advertising, agriculture communications and technical communications. It is also an introductory course designed to provide basic instruction in writing for print, broadcast and online media, advertising and public relations. Exploration of the role of mass media in today's world and its impact on our daily lives will be included in the course curriculum.

Instructional Methods: video lecture, student-directed learning, hands-on production and peer evaluation.

GENERAL GOALS AND MAJOR LEARNING OUTCOMES

The major objective of MMC 2100 is for students to be able to write accurately and comprehensively using the tenets of good news writing. Students should also be able to use persuasive writing to sway selected publics without misrepresentation and to understand the dynamics of communication.

At the completion of the course, students will demonstrate:

- ☐ correct newspaper style in news writing
- ☐ the ability to write hard news copy in an informative and timely way
- ☐ the ability to write an online news story, including breaking news
- ☐ the ability to write features that capture reader interest
- ☐ the ability to write broadcast news copy that stresses immediacy and basic news value
- ☐ the ability to write advertising copy and commercials that stress a unique selling point through emotional or rational appeal as well as PR material designed to garner public attention
- ☐ the ability to write a well-constructed cover letter and include major relevant sections of a resume

Prerequisite for course -- You must have completed the required six hours of English credit, typically ENC 1101 and ENC 1102. This requirement may be fulfilled through Advanced Placement scores.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

Stovall, James Glen. *Writing for the Mass Media*. Ninth Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 2015.

***The NINTH edition is the **ONLY** EDITION that is acceptable for this class.

Goldstein, Norm, editor. *The Associated Press Stylebook*. Addison-Wesley Publishing. (2011 or later). The bookstores will often place the AP Stylebook in the section for JOU 3101. You may want to purchase the iPhone app, which costs more than the print version but is searchable.

***It is **EXPECTED** that students have both these books purchased and in their possession by the start of Module 2 (**MONDAY JAN. 18**) – not having the books by that date will put any student significantly behind in the class

Other Materials

- ❓ Flash memory drive for transporting drafts of required lab assignments
- ❓ Reporter's notepad or small notebook for interview notes
- ❓ Audio recorder – recommended
- ❓ Web Cam and Microphone suggested for conducting interviews virtually
- ❓ Skype account – if you do not have a Skype account, watch this YouTube tutorial for setting up your Skype -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMAeAeyh7zM>

RESOURCES

Communications Coaching Center (1088 Weimer Hall) – Student members of the Journalism and Communications Ambassadors staff the center. They can provide coaching on writing assignments, grammar and AP style issues. They also can assist you in applying for internships and finding sources for stories.

Computers – Call 392-HELP for locations and hours of computer labs on campus.

Career Resource Center – The CRC is located on the main floor of the Reitz Union and provides free career assessment and counseling. Check the CRC web site for information about workshops, career and job fairs, or to schedule an appointment. <http://www.crc.ufl.edu>

Division of Student Services (352-392-1261) – Contact this office if you need to miss class due to an on-going medical problem or family emergency. This office will send a courtesy letter to your instructors about your absence.

Counseling Center (352-392-1575) – The center provides scheduled and drop-in appointments with counselors to discuss a range of personal issues. <http://www.counsel.ufl.edu>

Disability Resource Center – Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

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

COURSE GRADING:

Your grade will be broken down this way:

70 percent -- average of 10 written module assignments

15 percent – average of FOUR (4) tests

10 percent – average of FIVE (5) module quizzes

5 percent -- “other” assignments, textbook exercises etc. ***must be completed ONLY while that module is open

ASSIGNMENTS

There are TEN (10) written module assignments that each count 100 points (your final written module assignment grade will be the average of those 10 assignments):

*Resume/cover letter (Module 2)

*Police briefs – two averaged together (Module 3)

*News story (Module 4)

*Online news story (two parts/Module 5)

Personality profile (e-mail memo to lab instructor before end of Module 5/final draft due in Module 8)

Blog (create in Module 7, complete prior to end of Module 9)

*TV broadcast script (Module 8)

Photo essay (assigned in Module 9, due before end of Module 11)

*PR/news release (Module 10)

Ad project (restaurant) ad/print copy + visual presentation (ad memo due in Module 10, assignment due in Module 11)

*indicates deadline module assignment – meaning “written assignment” must be complete in a timed, deadline setting during that particular module

HOW WRITTEN MODULE ASSIGNMENTS ARE GRADED

Your grade on most writing assignments consists of the points earned for content minus the points deducted for errors and mechanics. To ensure consistency among written assignments, all instructors use the same grading standards.

NO written module assignments grades will be dropped or curved.

One of the goals is to make sure all written assignments are comparable. The lab instructors and Professor Marino meet to discuss the lab assignments and grading. All lab instructors use the same grading standard. Your grade on each written assignment will consist of the points earned for content minus the points deducted for stylistic errors, such as grammar and AP Style. There will be a grammar review in Module 1; however, you are expected to know the basic rules of grammar (correct use of commas etc).

HERE IS AN ADDITIONAL BREAKDOWN OF WRITTEN MODULE ASSIGNMENTS

Step One: Content

The content grade is based on criteria for each specific writing assignment. A rubric (a listing of grading criteria) will be provided for every assignment. The criteria vary depending on the particular lab assignment — news stories, news releases, advertising copy, etc. General criteria for all assignments include writing style, organization, clarity and appropriateness for topic and audience.

Step Two: Mechanics

After determining the content grade, points will be deducted for grammatical errors, spelling errors, factual errors and AP style errors. The points are deducted as follows:

- 2 points = grammar/punctuation errors.
- 2 points = AP style errors.
- 10 points = LATE DEDUCTION. Each assignment that is not submitted by deadline will receive an automatic -10 point deduction, then -10 point-deduction/day for each day the assignment is submitted late. **NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED MORE THAN THREE DAYS AFTER THE DUE DATE.**
- 15 points = Spelling error. Deducted both for misspelled words AND TYPOS. If the same word is misspelled more than once in a story, -15 points will be subtracted only once.
- 50 points = Factual error. This includes inaccurate information and errors or typos in proper nouns such as NAMES, numbers, addresses, dates and quotes. Misspelling a name (**EVEN AS A TYPO**) is considered a FACT ERROR – NOT A spelling error.

In Module 2, a fact error = -15. In Module 3, a fact error = -25. Beginning in Module 4, a fact error = -50.

Zero = You will receive a zero for using your friends, family members, employers or work colleagues as sources for stories that require your own reporting, as those would be seen as a potential conflict of interest. You may interview those individuals for background information or to help you identify other sources, but you may not include them in your story. You will receive a zero for making up information or quotes (fabrication) or plagiarism. You will receive a zero for using a photograph that you did not take for assignments that require you to take your own photographs.

FOUR (4) EXAMS (15 PERCENT)

Exam One (100 points)

Exam Two (100 points)

Exam Three (100 points)

Exam Four (100 points)

Each “open exam period” is listed at the end of this syllabus. Each exam will include 50 multiple-choice questions. There will be a study guide for each exam. No make-up exams will be given. **THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAM.**

FIVE (5) QUIZZES (10 PERCENT)

Your quiz grade will be the average of the FIVE quiz grades.

***See course schedule for dates of quizzes. ***Quizzes will ONLY be available during that module.

No make-up quizzes will be given. NO quiz grades will be dropped.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

There are several extra credit opportunities:

1. Complete "Cleaning Your Copy" at <http://www.newsu.org/courses/cleaning-your-copy-grammar-style-more> (do all except Style section) and send a course report to your lab instructor prior to Module 3 (10 points)
2. Complete Mechanics Inventory for Modules 1-3 and Modules 4-6 and submit to your lab instructor by due date for +5 points of extra credit EACH.
3. Professor Marino may also announce additional extra credit throughout the semester.

CANVAS DEADLINE POLICY

Online courses follow the same deadline policy and contain the same academic requirements/workload as in-person classes. If you have never taken an online class, make sure you have thoroughly read this section and completely understand MMC 2100's deadline policy. UF's official attendance policy and can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

However, an online class is quite different in structure than an in-person class:

☑ The majority of the 12 modules – as well as your module written assignments -- will be open for a minimum of THREE (3) days.

☑ It is expected that you complete ALL assignments for each module in that specified period.

☑ LATE submissions for any classwork in MMC 2100 WILL INCUR THE FOLLOWING DEDUCTIONS:

Automatic **-10-point deduction** for failing to meet the module assignment deadline.

Then, **-10 point deduction** for EACH DAY after deadline the assignment is submitted.

Assignments WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED more than **THREE** days after original due date.

Cases of serious illness or family or medical emergency will be determined on an individual basis by Professor Marino – NOT your lab instructor. However, because there is a minimum "3-7 -day open window" for most assignments, ONLY extreme emergency circumstances with documented medical proof will be considered.

*****Attending an out-of-town trip for a UF club or athletic team during the week an assignment is due or **temporarily losing Internet access or having work scheduling conflicts ARE NOT considered extreme emergency circumstances**. It is expected that if a student is out of town for any reason the week an assignment is due that he/she bring along his/her laptop. It is also expected from students in online classes to budget their time properly and submit assignments on time. If you run into unforeseen Internet difficulties, it is up to you to find an alternative location to submit your assignment – and NOT wait until the last few hours before an assignment is due when you may have limited submission options.

COURSE EVALUATION

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>

Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

GRADING SCALE (FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS AND THE COURSE OVERALL)

We do not assign minus grades.

A 90-100	C+ 77-79	D 60-66
B+ 87-89	C 70-76	E 59 and below
B 80-86	D+ 67-69	

ACADEMIC HONESTY GUIDELINES

Academic honesty is an important dimension of your performance as a student. As a student at the University of Florida, you have agreed to comply with the University Honor Code.

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

More information on the Honor Code can be found at:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

Review the information posted online that explains what academic dishonesty violations are, how to avoid those, and what the penalties are for those found guilty of violations.

In MMC 2100, if you are found to have committed an academic honesty violation in lecture or lab, you will receive a zero (0) for the assignment and may be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Violations include:

- ☒ Receiving or giving help during a quiz or exam.
- ☒ Using someone else’s quotes or information without appropriate attribution.
- ☒ Using friends, family members or work colleagues as sources in your stories
- ☒ Using someone else’s photos for assignments that require you to take your own photos
- ☒ Making up quotes or information (i.e. fabrication)

You can read about issues related to academic dishonesty in the College of Journalism and Communications at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/jou/honesty/>

IMPORTANT DATES – FALL SEMESTER 2015

Drop-Add: January 5-8 and Jan. 11, 2016

Last day to withdraw with no fee liability: January 11, 2016

Last day to withdraw with 25 percent refund: January 29, 2016

Last day to withdraw and receive a “W”: April 8, 2016

MMC 2100: WRITING FOR MASS COMMUNICATION TENTATIVE MMC 2100 COURSE OUTLINE/ SPRING 2016

Module 1 (January 5-January 17): *All Module 1 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday January 17**

Course overview. Review syllabus. Chapter 1: Sit Down and Write. Chapter 2: Basic Tools of Writing. Review Grammar refresher. Appendix B & C. Syllabus quiz 1. Module 1 written assignment.

Module 2 (January 18-24): *All Module 2 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday January 24**

Grammar exercises. Grammar quiz 2.

Chapter 3: Style and the Stylebook and Chapter 13: Getting a Job in the Mass Media. Writing in correct journalistic style. Using the AP stylebook. Appendix A. Using correct copy-editing symbols. Module 2 written assignment: resume/cover letter #1.

Module 3 (January 25-31): *All Module 3 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday January 31**

AP style practice exercises. AP Style quiz 3

Chapter 5: Basic News Writing. Writing police brief. Inverted pyramid. Nut graph. Practice extra credit police brief. Module 3 written assignment: police brief #2.

Module 4 (February 1-7): *All Module 4 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Feb. 7**

Continue Chapter 5. Writing longer news story. Direct/indirect quotes. Direct quote quiz 4. Module 4 written assignment: news story #3.

Module 5 (February 8-14): *All Module 5 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Feb. 14**

Chapter 6: Writing for Print Journalism (Feature Writing). Begin personality profile assignment: profile memo. Chapter 7: Writing for the Web. How to write an online news story and best news Web sites. Social media networks. Module 5 written assignment: online news story (two versions) #4.

*****TEST 1 "OPEN PERIOD": FRIDAY FEB. 12 at 7 PM THROUGH SUNDAY FEB. 14 at 11:59 PM (CHAPTERS 1-7, APPENDIX A, B, C).**

Module 6 (February 15-21): *All Module 6 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Feb. 21**

Chapter 6: Writing for Print Journalism (Feature Writing). Conduct interview with personality profile partner through Canvas Conferences. ***No Module 6 written assignment this week.

Module 7 (February 22-28): *All Module 7 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. FRIDAY FEB. 26******

Chapter 7: Blogging. Blog assignment instructions. Email blog memo to lab instructor. Create Tumblr blog once receive blog topic approval from lab instructor. Module 7 written assignment: submit personality profile #5. Submit personality peer review survey.

******UF SPRING BREAK: FEB. 27-MARCH 5******

Module 8 (March 7-13): *All Module 8 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday March 13**

Chapter 8: Writing for Broadcast Journalism. Make blog posts. Module 8 written assignment: TV broadcast script writing #6.

*****TEST 2 "OPEN PERIOD": FRIDAY MARCH 11 at 7 PM THROUGH SUNDAY MARCH 13 at 11:59 PM (CHAPTERS 6-8)*****

Module 9 (March 14-20): *All Module 9 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday March 20**

Chapter 9: Writing and Images. Photo essay instruction. Module 9 written assignment: blog #7.

Module 10 (March 21-27): *All Module 10 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday March 27**

Chapter 11: Writing for Public Relations. Module 10 written assignment: PR/news release #8.

Submit ad memo to lab instructor.

Module 11 (March 28-April 10): *All Module 11 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday April 10**

Chapter 10: Writing Advertising Copy. Ad project instruction. Module 11 written assignment: photo essay #9.

*****TEST 3 "OPEN PERIOD": FRIDAY APRIL 8 at 7 PM THROUGH SUNDAY APRIL 10 at 11:59 PM (CHAPTERS 9-11).**

Module 12 (April 11-April 20): *All Module 12 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Wednesday April 20**

Chapter 12: The Writer and the Law. Alligator media law pop quiz #5. Module 12 written assignment: Ad project #10.

*****TEST 4 "OPEN PERIOD": MONDAY APRIL 18 at 7 PM THROUGH WEDNESDAY APRIL 20 at 11:59 PM (CHAPTER 12)*****