

## Writing for Mass Communication (MMC 2100) Fall Semester 2016

# COURSE SYLLABUS

### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Lead instructor:** Professor Rob Marino  
(Sect. 2693, 2694)  
**Email:** through Canvas

**Section instructor:** Ms. Erin Jester (Sect. 042A)  
**Email:** through Canvas  
**Section instructor:** Mr. Sean McCrory (Sect. 17E3)  
**Email:** through Canvas  
**Section Instructor:** Mr. David Moore (Sect. 1A18)  
**Email:** through Canvas

### **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.

\*\*\*It is recommended that you attend ONE of the FOUR virtual office hours each week. Either Professor Marino or one of the three section instructors, Ms. Jester, Mr. McCrory or Mr. Moore, will be moderating each of FOUR office hours during the week to provide immediate feedback on each assignment.

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

The class is structured so you will written assignments in addition to exams, quizzes and textbook exercises.

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 or your section 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 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 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 SEPT. 5**) – 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
- ☒ iPhone for taking photos
- ☒ Web Cam and Microphone (Skype account) suggested for conducting interviews virtually

## 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/](http://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.

**University Writing Program (352-846-1138)**– if you are an English as Second Language Student (ESL), this program offers writing assistance. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/for-students/esl-assistance/>

## Course Evaluations

“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/>.

## **COURSE GRADING:**

### **Your grade will be broken down this way:**

70 percent -- average of EIGHT (8) written module assignments

15 percent – average of THREE (3) exams

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 EIGHT (8) written module assignments that each count 100 points (your final written module assignment grade will be the average of those EIGHT assignments – each counts the same and no grades will be dropped):

- Resume/cover letter
- Police briefs (2)
- News Story
- Personality Profile
- Photo Essay
- Blog
- PR Release
- Ad Project

## **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.

One of the goals is to make sure all written assignments are comparable. All section 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.

**\*\*\*NO LATE ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED\*\*\*Once each module closes, NO assignments WILL BE ACCEPTED**

- 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, names, numbers, addresses, dates and quotes. \*\*\*See document "Fact error examples" for what constitutes a fact error

There will be a sliding scale for fact errors:

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.

## **THREE (3) EXAMS (15 PERCENT)**

Exam One (100 points)

Exam Two (100 points)

Exam Three (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.

## 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, particularly during the summer when the term is shorter than the fall or spring.

☒ The majority of the EIGHT (8) modules – as well as your module written assignments -- will be open for a minimum of THREE (3) days, but many will be open for at least ONE WEEK.

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

☒ **\*\*\*NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED\*\*\*** Once a module closes, you will be unable to submit an assignment

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 you to find an alternative location to submit your assignment – and NOT wait until the last few minutes when you have limited submission options. **\*\*\*NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED\*\*\***

## 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**

Drop-Add: Aug.22-26, 2016

Last day to withdraw with no fee liability: Aug. 26, 2016

Last day to withdraw with 25 percent refund: Sept. 16, 2016

Last day to withdraw and receive a “W”: Nov. 21, 2016

# **MMC 2100: WRITING FOR MASS COMMUNICATION TENTATIVE MMC 2100 COURSE OUTLINE/ FALL 2016**

## **Module 1: Intro and Start Here (Aug. 22-Sept. 4): \*\*\*All Module 1 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Sept. 4**

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. Grammar textbook exercises. Grammar exercises. Grammar quiz 2.

Module 1 written assignment: written “prompt”\*\*\*this grade will count as part of the “other assignments” portion of your overall grade (5 percent)

## **Module 2: Resume/Cover Letter (Sept. 5-11): \*\*\*All Module 2 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Sept. 11**

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. AP Style textbook exercises. AP Style quiz 3

Module 2 written assignment: Resume/Cover Letter.

## **Module 3: Police Brief (Sept. 12-18): \*\*\*All Module 3 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Sept. 18**

Chapter 5: Basic News Writing. Writing police brief. Inverted pyramid. Nut graph. Extra credit police brief.

Module 3 written assignment: Police briefs (2).

## **Module 4: News story (Sept. 19-25): \*\*\*All Module 4 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Sept.25**

Continue Chapter 5. Writing longer online news story. Direct/indirect quotes. Direct quote quiz 4. Chapter 7: Writing for the Web. How to write an online news story and best news Web sites. Social media networks.

\*\*\*Begin personality profile assignment: profile memo – must be submitted BY SUNDAY SEPT. 25 BY 11:59 p.m. (-10 point deduction if profile memo is not submitted by this time)

Module 4 written assignment: News Story.

**\*\*\*TEST #1: (CHAPTERS 1-7, APPENDIX A, B, C) – “OPEN PERIOD”: MONDAY SEPT. 26 at 10 a.m. through WEDNESDAY SEPT. 28 at 11:59 p.m.\*\*\***

## **Personality profile Module (TWO PARTS) – Part A: interview portion (Sept. 26-Oct. 2)**

Chapter 6: Writing for Print Journalism (Feature Writing)

Conduct interview with personality profile partner through Canvas Conferences/Skype/or in person.

Module 3 written assignment: submit Personality Peer Review Survey BY 11:59 p.m. SUNDAY OCT. 2. (-10 point deduction if survey is not submitted by this time).

**\*\*\*Professor Marino available for in-person individual conferences on campus on MONDAY OCT. 3-TUESDAY OCT. 4\*\*\*TIMES TBA**

**Personality profile—Part B: writing/revision portion -- (Oct. 3-9)**

MANDATORY personality profile rough draft of first “100 words” to be submitted by 11:59 P.M. FRIDAY OCT. 7 -- submit the first 100 words of your profile and comment on TWO of your classmates’ profiles by that time to receive full credit.

\*\*\*From Oct. 8-9 you should make revisions to your profile based on feedback you receive from your peers and section instructor\*\*\*

**FINAL PERSONALITY PROFILE DEADLINE: SUNDAY OCT. 9 by 11:59 P.M.**

**Media Law Module (Oct. 10-23):**

Chapter 12: The Writer and the Law.

**\*\*\*Test #2: Media Law (Chapter 12): Oct. 17-19: “OPEN PERIOD”: MONDAY OCT. 17 at 10 a.m. through WEDNESDAY OCT. 19 at 11:59 p.m.**

Alligator Media Law Quiz #5 due by SUNDAY OCT. 23 at 11:59 p.m.

**Photo Essay Module (Oct. 17-Nov. 6):**

Chapter 9: Writing and Images.

Create Tumblr account once receive photo essay topic approval from your section instructor.

Photo essay instructions

Photo essay memo submitted to your section instructor BY SUNDAY OCT. 23

MANDATORY photo essay rough draft and peer evaluation to be submitted by 11:59 p.m.

FRIDAY NOV. 4 – submit rough draft of your photo essay and comment on TWO of your classmates’ photo essays by that time to receive full credit.

\*\*\*From Nov. 5-6 you should make revisions to your photo essay based on feedback you receive from your peers and section instructor\*\*\*

**FINAL PHOTO ESSAY DEADLINE: SUNDAY NOV. 6 by 11:59 p.m.**

Blogging instructions available beginning Monday Oct. 31.

**Blogging Module (Nov. 7-20)**

Chapter 7: Blogging. Blog assignment instructions. \*\*\*Your blog will be posted ABOVE your photo essay on your Tumblr account once you receive blog topic approval from your section instructor.

MANDATORY blog rough draft and peer evaluation to be submitted by 11:59 p.m. FRIDAY NOV.

18 – submit rough draft of your blog and comment on TWO of your classmates’ blogs by that time to receive full credit.

\*\*\*From Nov. 19-20 you should make revisions to your blog based on feedback you receive from your peers and section instructor\*\*\*

**FINAL BLOG DEADLINE: SUNDAY NOV. 20 by 11:59 p.m.**

**Ad project directions available beginning Monday Nov. 14.**

**Ad project memo must be submitted by Sunday Nov. 20. (-10-point deduction if not submitted by this date).**

**Public Relations Module (Nov. 21-27)**

Chapter 11: Writing for Public Relations.

**Written assignment: compile a PR release from provided material.**

**\*\*\*Professor Marino available for in-person individual conferences on MONDAY NOV. 28-  
TUESDAY NOV. 29\*\*\* TIMES TBA**

**Ad Project Module (Nov. 28-Dec. 7):**

**\*\*\*Ad project memo MUST BE approved by section instructor prior to beginning ad  
project\*\*\***

Chapter 10: Writing Advertising Copy. Ad Project/Prezi instruction.

MANDATORY Prezi rough draft and peer evaluation to be submitted by 11:59 p.m. SUNDAY  
DEC. 4 – submit rough draft of your Prezi and comment on TWO of your classmates' Prezi's by  
that time to receive full credit.

**\*\*\*From Dec. 5-7 you should make revisions to your ad projects based on feedback you receive  
from your peers and section instructor\*\*\***

**FINAL AD PROJECT DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY DEC. 7 by 11:59 p.m.**

**\*\*\*TEST 3 (CHAPTERS 9-10) "OPEN PERIOD": MONDAY DEC. 5 at 10 a.m. through  
WEDNESDAY DEC. 7 at 11:59 P.M.**





