

Multimedia Writing

JOU3109C / 3 credits

[Summer 2018]

Instructor *Darlana Cunha*
dcunha@ufl.edu

Office Hours *By appointment*

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>.

Recommended Texts

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

When words collide, Kessler and McDonald, 9th edition. Cengage Learning.

- **Associated Press (AP) Stylebook.**
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. You're encouraged to purchase a recent edition, as you will be using the book in future classes. One source for the stylebook is <http://www.apstylebook.com>
- Other readings and resource materials are included in each module.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

Prereq: ENC 1102 and one of the following: JOU 1001 or JOU 1100 or MMC 2604 or PUR 3000, with minimum grade of C.

Course Description

Introduces news and public relations writing and the use of multimedia tools in gathering and disseminating information. 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

In designing this course, your instructors have considered ways to get you actively engaged – from critiquing a classmate’s practice assignment to having you take notes during a video interview and then write a story. We 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. We 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, some of 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 will be responsible to complete 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 time.

Course Technology

You'll need reliable Internet access and a reliable computer with Microsoft Word (or other word-processing software that can generate a .doc or .docx file). I must be able to open your work in order to grade it. If you don't submit your work through eLearning in the requested format (typically as a Word document), you risk big point deductions.

Submitting work and receiving feedback

You'll submit your assignments in eLearning, and I'll 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, a quiz or an exam, you must email me through Canvas within 24 hours of receiving your grade.*

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 <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. When you use information (including images) from any source, you should cite it appropriately. In a visually oriented class such as this, it may be tempting to “borrow” creative ideas from other sources. This is not acceptable. It is OK, however, to be inspired by other creative works. Do not cross the line between inspiration and intellectual theft. If you have any questions or concerns about how to appropriately be inspired, talk with me. I am more than happy to help you understand what is inspiration and what is plagiarism. 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. If you have any questions regarding this policy, ask me! “But I didn’t know...” is not an excuse. **Academic integrity violations will result in a failing grade for the course, without exception.**

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

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

Getting Help

For issues with technical difficulties for eLearning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty 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.

You'll see that the modules have different activities and total a different number of points, but in the overall calculation, each module counts equally, except for Module 10 that counts double, as it requires you to do your own reporting.

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 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.

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 5, 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. **Together, the writing assignments within the modules are worth about 70% of your grade.** Some strategies to assist you in editing your work include:

- Reading your work aloud.
- Reading your work backwards (this helps me catch misspellings).
- 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.

Grading Scale

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 93% - 100% = A | 90% - 92% = A- |
| 87% - 89% = B+ | 83% - 86% = B | 80% - 82% = B- |
| 77% - 79% = C+ | 73% - 76% = C | 70% - 72% = C- |
| 67% - 69% = D+ | 63% - 66% = D | 60% - 62% = D- |
| Below 60% = E | | |

Course Schedule

| Module | Date | Topic | Assignment |
|--------|---------|---|---|
| 1 | May 18 | Setting Your Goals | Introduce yourself; Answer 4 career questions |
| 2 | May 25 | Writing Résumé and Cover Letter | Résumé and cover letter for communications-related internship or job |
| 3 | June 1 | Writing Hard-News Stories | Write news story based on information provided |
| 4 | June 8 | Writing News-Feature Stories | Write feature story based on information provided |
| 5 | June 15 | Writing Personality Profile | Write personality profile |
| 6 | June 22 | Creating Your Blog | Set up blog and begin blogging |
| 7 | June 29 | Taking Effective Photos | Take photos based on assigned topics and write captions |
| 8 | July 6 | 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 13 | Writing News-Feature Stories with Multiple Sources Part Two | Write an environmental story based on interviews you listen to |
| 10 | July 20 | Writing an Environmental, Health, Science or Technology Story | Determine a story focus, pitch your story idea, conduct interviews and write a story with publication potential |
| 11 | July 27 | Writing a News Release | Write a news release based |

| | | | |
|----|---------|------------------------------------|---|
| | | Part One | on information you receive |
| 12 | Aug. 1 | Writing a News Release Part Two | Write a news release following a client's specifications |
| 13 | Aug. 10 | Your Blog | Demonstrate your blogging skills based on maintaining a blog since Module 6 |

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.