

# Multimedia Writing

JOU3109C / 3 credits

Spring 2020

**Instructor:** Karen Dooley

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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, information found within readings/lectures, how your writing will be assessed, or the feedback I provide you.

## Course Description

Multimedia Writing introduces journalism 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.

## Course Goals and Objectives

This course was designed to encourage you to be proactive in your learning by requiring you to apply the concepts learned in each module to answering discussion posts that prompt critical thinking, and completing assignments that develop and demonstrate your writing and communication skills. The ability to critically think and write and communicate clearly will benefit you whether you choose a career path in communications or another field.

In this course you will learn:

- Terms and concepts used in the media industry
- How to communicate clearly and accurately in a variety of media styles: news story, news feature, profile story, news releases, social media, and blogging
- How to take photos that follow basic photojournalism rules. You will demonstrate your photography skills in a photo essay.
- Best practices for blogging. You will create and maintain a blog throughout the course.

- Best practices for creating a professional digital portfolio. You will create a portfolio on your professional/blog website.
- What makes a story newsworthy. You will pitch and write your own environmental, health, science, or technology story.
- How to use social media to create a professional brand
- How to use social media to engage in live reporting
- How to locate sources and conduct interviews for stories
- To edit your work, using correct spelling/grammar and following AP Style
- To provide constructive feedback to your classmates by participating in peer reviews
- To apply concepts learned through readings and lecture videos to complete assignments and engage on the discussion board with classmates.

### **Course Relation to 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.

### **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>.

### **Instructional Methods**

The course is designed to include a variety of approaches. The majority of modules include 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 assigned readings and activities to be completed; such activities include practice writing assignments, quizzes, class discussions, and a major writing assignment for the module. The major writing assignment draws upon all that you have learned and practiced within the module. Some of these major assignments can become part of your professional portfolio.

### **Required Texts**

- Rich, Carole (2016). [\*Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method\*](#) (8<sup>th</sup> edition). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.
- [\*Associated Press \(AP\) Stylebook\*](#) (newest edition).

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, go to:

<http://www.apstylebook.com>.

- Other readings and resource materials are included in each module.
- Purchase textbooks by the end of the first week of the semester.

## **Recommended Texts**

- Straus, J. (2014). *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation*. (11<sup>th</sup> edition). San Francisco, CA: Wiley
  - Readings will be suggested from this text throughout the semester. The website (<https://www.grammarbook.com/>) provides grammar and punctuation assistance along with practice worksheets and quizzes for free.
- Digital subscription to *The New York Times*. As a student at UF, you have access to a free digital subscription to *The New York Times*. To subscribe to *The New York Times*, follow the instructions below:
  1. Go to <https://my.ufl.edu/ps/signon.html>
  2. After signing in, select the Navigation Bar in the upper right corner (three stacked horizontal lines)
  3. Select “Main Menu”
  4. Select “Quick Links”
  5. Select “NY Times”
  6. Select “Subscribe Now” and follow subscription instructions.
  7. Verify email address
  8. Access NY Times

## **POLICIES**

### **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, you will receive a zero on the assignment.

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

## **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. This includes corresponding with your classmates as well as with me, your instructor.

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

## **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 documented technical issues, on a case-by-case basis. You MUST email me, the instructor, no more than 24 hours after an assignment is due if you wish to make-up an assignment. If you do not contact me within 24 hours of the due date, you will receive a zero on the assignment.**

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 Computing Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem.

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.

## **Submitting Work, Receiving Feedback, and Discussing Grades**

You will submit your assignments in eLearning, and I will provide feedback meant to encourage you and help you improve.

Depending on the assignment, you will see feedback in one or more of the following ways:

- A summary comment
- Annotated comments that can be read in DocViewer
- A completed rubric
- An attached file in the summary comment box
- An announcement providing general feedback to the class regarding an assignment

Read "[How do I view assignment comments from my instructor? \(Canvas\)](#)" for assistance with viewing feedback.

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 returned.**

## **Plagiarism**

**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.

## **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 Computing Help Desk and E-learning Support Services at:

Email: [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu) (or) [learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:learning-support@ufl.edu)

Phone: (352) 392-HELP (4357)

FAQs for Students: <https://kb.helpdesk.ufl.edu/FAQs/E-Learning>

Also, consult the Canvas Student Guide on how to navigate and use Canvas as a student:  
<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701-canvas-student-guide-table-of-contents>

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 activities within each module.

Instructions will accompany each assignment, quiz, and discussion board you need to complete. A rubric will be provided for each assignment and discussion board; use the rubric as a checklist as you complete the assignment. **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, points will be deducted in each written assignment for typographical and grammar errors. In Module 3 you will start to receive deductions for AP Style errors and fact errors. 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.

## **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**

Consult Canvas for the most up to date information on assignments and due dates.

Module	Week(s)	Topic	Assignments
Orientation and Introduction		How to be a successful online student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz: Syllabus</li> <li>• DB: Introductions</li> <li>• DB: Preparing to be an online student</li> <li>• Purchase textbooks</li> </ul>
1		Storytelling and News Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz: Reading and Lecture Quiz Module 1</li> <li>• DB: How do you get your news?</li> <li>• DB: Distinguishing between factual and opinion statements</li> <li>• AS: Qualities of News</li> </ul>
2		Story Organization and The Basic News Story (Part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz: Reading and Lecture Quiz Module 2</li> <li>• Quiz: AP Style (Part 1)</li> <li>• DB: Finding the focus of a story</li> <li>• AS: Practice Planning a Story</li> </ul>
3		Story Organization and The Basic News Story (Part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz: Reading and Lecture Quiz Module 3</li> <li>• AS: Practice writing a hard-news story &amp; Peer Review</li> <li>• AS: Write a hard-news story</li> </ul>
4		Writing Leads (Part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz: Reading and Lecture Quiz Module 4</li> <li>• DB: Write a summary lead for a fairy tale</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AS: Identifying summary leads, soft leads, and nut graphs</li> </ul>
5		Writing Leads (Part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quiz: AP Style (Part 2)</li> <li>AS: Practice writing a news-feature story &amp; Peer Review</li> <li>AS: Write a news-feature story</li> <li>Extra Credit AS: Multicultural Story Ideas</li> </ul>
6		Interviewing Techniques and Writing a Profile Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quiz: Reading and Lecture Quiz Module 6</li> <li>AS: Personal Profile Focus Memo</li> <li>AS: Practice Profile Story Workshop</li> <li>AS: Profile Story of Classmate</li> </ul>
7		Online Journalism and Writing for Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quiz: Reading and Lecture Quiz Module 7</li> <li>DB: Blog pitch</li> <li>AS: Professional Portfolio and Blog Setup</li> <li>AS: Set up a Twitter account and live-tweet a current event</li> </ul>
8		Storytelling using Photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quiz: Reading and Lecture Quiz Module 8</li> <li>DB: Practice Writing Captions</li> <li>DB: Photo Essay Pitch</li> <li>AS: Photo Essay</li> <li>Continue to post to your blog.</li> </ul>
9		Reporting and Writing Your Own Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quiz: Reading and Lecture Quiz Module 9</li> <li>DB: EHST Story Pitch</li> <li>AS: EHST Story</li> <li>Extra Credit AS: Reporting Simulation</li> <li>Continue to post to your blog.</li> </ul>
10		Writing for Public Relations (Part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quiz: Reading and Lecture Quiz Module 10</li> <li>DB: Pitch Kickstarter Product for News Release</li> <li>AS: Practice Writing a News Release &amp; Peer Review</li> <li>AS: Writing a News Release for an Event</li> <li>Continue to post to your blog.</li> </ul>
11		Writing for Public Relations (Part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AS: Product News Release</li> <li>Continue to post to your blog.</li> </ul>
12		Professional Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AS: Resume</li> <li>AS: Professional Portfolio and Blog</li> </ul>

## Important Dates

Classes begin: Jan. 6



Drop/Add: Jan. 6-10 (11:59 p.m. of last day)

Withdrawal from all courses with no fee liability: Jan. 10 (11:59 p.m.)

Classes End: April 22

Final Grades Available: May 7

**Holidays:**

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Jan. 20

Spring Break: Feb. 29-March 7

**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.