

MMC 3254 Media Entrepreneurship

Fall 2019 / Section 17788, 17787, 17786

Mondays, 10:40 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (Weimer 1076), 12:50 p.m. – 1:40 p.m. (FLG 0275),
3 p.m. – 3:50 p.m. (Weimer 1092), 1 credit

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“Office hours” are a challenge, since I don’t have an office. However, you can schedule time with me after class on Mondays, or by appointment (usually Thursdays). Email and phone call connections can work too.

About me: I’m a former television news producer in large markets, and a current freelancer for national publications like TIME, The Washington Post, The Atlantic, The Boston Globe, The New York Times, Salon, The Guardian, and scores more. I write both straight journalism and opinion about politics, health, science, technology, parenting, feminism / “women’s issues”, business, money, food and social justice. And everything else.

ABOUT THE COURSE

This course is for future media professionals who aspire to control their careers. Rather than be cogs in a corporate machine, people in this class will make a difference by being indispensable because of their ideas, their ability to put those ideas into actions and by finding an audience.

So much of journalism is not done for a single boss at a single company anymore. Whether you are freelancing or starting up your own business, many journalists find themselves out on their own. We’ll go through how to manage not only coming up with and executing ideas, but all the important gaps no one ever tells you about (like how to pitch to be accepted, how to keep your paperwork in order to be successful, how to deal with taxes, how to sell your ideas to clients or your services/business to the public, and so much more). This is a practical class that will prepare you for real life out there in the media landscape when you’ve got to fall back on your own ingenuity and creativity and drive to get by.

You will learn techniques to develop projects and businesses that take advantage of the evolutionary environment in digital media. You will find a community to serve and

find ways to deliver while also making at least enough money to keep the project going. You will be a lynchpin in the success of a media company, the entrepreneur who starts the next amazing company, the independent media professional who provides unique insights to help others grow their businesses, or the hotshot freelance writer who writes what she wants when she wants to and gets paid to do it from wherever she is.

Most all, you will do the scary work of evaluating a most precious asset — you. Extrovert or introvert, artist or business minded, writer or visual, you will start to identify strengths and weaknesses and how they will serve you. Then, you will bring those attributes to a team. This is so individualized, and so important. Use your strengths. We'll find them together and hone them.

To do this, we will talk and share. My title is lecturer so I will ramble a bit, but you will be expected to contribute. You need to share your ideas and, as importantly, listen to your classmates.

This is a just one-credit class, and showing up is important, but not enough. You will do need to do something to surprise me, and yourself.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Answer the question of “Why you?”
- Write and sell ideas
- Navigate the self-employment landscape
- Learn how to create internal projects in a corporate environment
- Learn business concepts that will allow you to create a business, work for yourself or manage your career working within a media company.
- Get published, meet with agents and clients, network in real time, solve practical problems on the go.

PREREQUISITE

There are no prerequisite course requirements for this class. You will need these skills: clear writing, basic familiarity with a spreadsheet, and effective presentations using PowerPoint or equivalent. You will have additional advantage if you can communicate across multiple platforms. You will be working independently on early projects and collaboratively on the final project.

COURSE FORMAT

The class is one credit and meets one period, one day a week. Most work will be done outside of class. You will have reading assignments in advance of class and will be expected to contribute in the conversation.

We will also schedule an additional meeting time at the end of semester for project teams to pitch their media company proposals. We will also schedule practice sessions for that presentation.

As you can see, although this is a one credit class, it carries a workload.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

- “The Startup of You” by Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha. Crown Business, 2012. ISBN: 978-0307888907. Also available as an e-book.
- “Word Work: Surviving and Thriving as a Writer” by Bruce Holland Rogers, Invisible Cities Press, ISBN: 9791931229172
- “The Art of the Start 2.0” by Guy Kawasaki. Portfolio, 2015. trade ISBN 9781591847847. Also available as an e-book

I will be lecturing from the textbooks, but there is not a written test from that information. Other readings from internet sources will be assigned during the semester.

Classroom Policies

Attendance is required and expected each week unless you have a documented absence, such as illness, jury duty, university event, etc. If you have an extenuating circumstance, please speak to me beforehand. More than one unexcused absence will result in a 2-point deduction from your overall grade for each absence.

You are permitted to use devices such as phones, tablets and laptops for notes. However, use of these devices must be related to the course and assignment at hand.

Students requesting special classroom needs must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide the documentation to instructor.

Violation of the honor code includes plagiarizing material from other sources or fabricating material, as well as other forms of cheating. Violations will result in a failing grade, and you will be dismissed from the journalism program and reported to the Honor Court. See the Department of Journalism web site for specific outline of honor code violations.

Academic Integrity: University of Florida students live by an honor code that prohibits academic dishonesty such as (but not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of sources or information from sources, reusing a paper from another class, writing a similar paper for two classes, drawing too heavily on another's work for your own and having someone else complete your work for you. If you're unsure of whether something constitutes a violation of academic integrity, ask me before turning in an assignment. Also, please refer to the University of Florida's guidelines regarding academic honesty at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/studentconduct-honor-code/>. Ignorance is not an excuse.

An academic integrity violation will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly the entire course, and the instance will be reported to the university's office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

Grading Scale:

A = 93-100
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76
C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69
D = 63-66
D- = 60-62
F = 59 and below

ASSIGNMENTS:

Personal essay: 5%
Interview: 5%
Fact Checking Assignment: 5%
Story: 35%

- Freelance Ideas:
- Rough Draft:
- Edits
- Final Draft:
- Publication:

Pitches: 10%

- Ideas
- Submissions:

Business Pitch: 15%

- First draft:
- Edits

Business Plan: 25%

- First draft
- Edits
- Final draft

Schedule

The schedule can change during the semester if we need to pivot. Guest speakers will also be added.

Week 1

Monday, January 6 – Friday, January 10

- 1) Get to know you.

What makes individuals stand out in a crowd? How do we play weaknesses as strengths, and harness our unique abilities to get farther?

ASSIGNMENT: Write a personal essay about what makes you stand out in a sea of other wannabe writers and entrepreneurs. Be specific. This is not a resume or a cover letter. It's a love letter to yourself in essay form. Use imagery, memory, conversation, etc. You can go off one example alone or go over a plethora of reasons, but it must be compelling. DUE SUNDAY, JAN. 12

Week 2

Monday, January 13 – Friday, January 17

Writing

Content

- 1) Current events
- 2) Politics
- 3) Essays
- 4) Environment/Tech/Science
- 5) Local to National, National to Local
- 6) Trend Stories
- 7) Straight News
- 8) Opinion News

READ: <https://www.poynter.org/news/4-types-journalists-how-they-tick-and-what-we-can-learn-them>

NYT'S The Blur Between Analysis and Opinion

A DEFENCE OF POLEMICS

<https://www.freelancewriting.com/journalism/different-types-of-journalism/>

- Skills
- 1) Interviewing

READ: <https://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/reporting/interviewing-a-source>

ASSIGNMENT: Interview someone outside of class and write a question and answer type piece that will include a brief introduction of the subject, the q and a portion, and a conclusion that puts the piece into context. Make sure the piece revolves around a theme. 400-800 words. DUE SUNDAY, JAN. 19

WEEK 3 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY, NO CLASS

Week 4

Monday, January 27 – Friday, January 31

- 1) Interviewing
- 2) Researching
- 3) Fact Checking

READ: <https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2016/12/05/503581220/fake-or-real-how-to-self-check-the-news-and-get-the-facts>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolreport/21028678>

ASSIGNMENT: Go through the article given in class and linked in Canvas and cite the facts back to the primary sources, or at least the secondary sources. DUE SUNDAY, FEB. 2

ASSIGNMENT 2: Start thinking of the type of story you are going to write for freelance publication, and write up three ideas that we will go over and hone in the next class. DUE SUNDAY, FEB. 2

Week 5

Monday, February 3 – Friday, February 7

- 1) How to write a basic news story
- 2) How to write a feature story

READ:

https://www.csun.edu/~bashforth/406_PDF/406_Essay3/HardNewsVSFeatureStories.pdf

<https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/stratcommwriting/chapter/types-of-news-stories/>

ASSIGNMENT: Write a rough draft of your story. DUE SUNDAY, FEB. 9

PART II

Freelancing Mechanics

Week 6

Monday, February 10 – Friday, February 14

- Pitching
- Editing

READ: <https://www.freelancewriting.com/query-letters/write-the-perfect-article-pitch/>

<https://thewritelife.com/real-freelance-writing-pitches/>

ASSIGNMENT 1: Craft a pitch for your story for three potential publications. These are basically the same in idea, but tailored to the publications' guidelines and audience.
DUE SUNDAY, FEB. 16

ASSIGNMENT 2: Edit a classmate's story. DUE SUNDAY, FEB. 16

Week 7

Monday, February 17 – Friday, February 21

- Forming relationships
- Asking for money
- What not to do

READ: <https://elnacain.com/blog/14-common-mistakes/>

<https://www.mediabistro.com/go-freelance/business-basics/7-mistakes-every-freelance-writer-avoid/>

<https://thewritelife.com/how-to-be-a-freelance-writer-10-embarrassing-mistakes/>

<https://www.mediabistro.com/go-freelance/journalism-advice/what-editors-really-want-from-writers/>

<https://writingcooperative.com/youre-worth-it-how-to-get-paid-as-a-freelance-writer-c58fe4fd949b>

ASSIGNMENT: Edit your story based on your classmate's and my suggestions. DUE SUNDAY, FEB. 23

Week 8

Monday, February 24 – Friday, February 28

- Tracking
- Invoicing

READ: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/abdullahimammed/2017/10/31/why-you-should-track-your-freelance-pitches-and-how-to-do-it-right/#7501c37892e8>

<https://www.clearvoice.com/blog/accounting-record-keeping-issues-freelance-writers/>

<https://thewritelife.com/how-to-create-your-first-invoice-as-a-freelancer/>

ASSIGNMENT: Finalize story. Send it out to the first publication using the pitch you made and we went over. DUE SUNDAY, MAR. 1

Week 9 SPRING BREAK

Week 10

Monday, March 9 – Friday, March 13

- Health insurance
- Taxes

READ: <https://www.makealivingwriting.com/yes-freelancers-can-get-health-insurance-12-options/>

<http://time.com/money/4251595/best-healthcare-for-freelancers/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurashin/2014/07/18/freelancers-heres-how-to-do-your-taxes/>

<https://turbotax.intuit.com/tax-tips/self-employment-taxes/a-freelancers-guide-to-taxes/L6ACNfKVVW>

ASSIGNMENT: If not accepted by first publication, send out story to second publication. Upload screen shot to Canvas. DUE SUNDAY, MAR. 15

Week 11

Monday, March 16 – Friday, March 20

- Dealing with the response
 - 1) Viral
 - 2) Social Media
 - 3) Syndication
 - 4) Reprints
 - 5) Threats

READ: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/author-viral-short-story-cat-person-lands-seven-figure-book-deal-1069555>

ASSIGNMENT: Send out story to third publication. DUE SUNDAY, MAR. 22

PART III

Entrepreneurship

Week 12

Monday, March 23 – Friday, March 27

- Leaders vs. Managers

READ: The Startup of You, Part 2

READ: The Art of the Start, Chapter 3

ASSIGNMENT: Write a pitch for a media business startup or model you think would work. Name the business and give us a brief summary, then answer the following: WHO: who is the audience and who are the main players, WHAT: what is the business about, what need does it fill, WHEN: when are you thinking of starting it and why that time?, WHERE: What location will you use for the business, not just brick and mortar, but where on the web? How will it look, how will people access it? WHY: Why is it needed now? HOW: How do you envision it working? DUE SUNDAY, MAR. 29

Week 13

Monday, March 30 – Friday, April 3

- Identifying niche and need
- Mock Shark Tank day, media style

READ: The Startup of You, Part 3

READ: The Art of the Start, Chapters 1 and 2

ASSIGNMENT 1: Decide within group which pitch to take forward

ASSIGNMENT 2: Craft that pitch into a full-fledged business plan, with 10 presentation slides. DUE SUNDAY, APRIL 5

- 1) I have provided a template in the Files section for both the slides you will hand in AND the written proposal you will write. Look at it. It is labeled week 12.5 business plan.
- 2) Download that power point.
- 3) Change the slides labeled slide 1 - slide 10 to suit YOUR PROJECT (including the titles!)
- 4) Remember, the slides are easy. Just a few bullet points in 30 pt. font and some graphics, graphs, illustrations, charts or whatever, to help prove your point.
- 5) I will immediately give you a peer's to review.
- 7) REVIEW IT (It will be on the right-hand upper corner of your original submission). You don't have to post anything separate for that. I will see the review in the rough draft section automatically.
- 8) PRESENT YOUR PLAN. THIS MEANS COME TO CLASS. THIS IS 30% OF YOUR PROPOSAL GRADE. IF YOU DON'T COME TO CLASS ON MONDAY, THE HIGHEST YOU CAN GET ON YOUR PROPOSAL IS A 70. THIS GOES FOR THE CLASS YOU ARE NOT PRESENTING FOR, ALSO.

Week 14

Monday, April 6 – Friday, April 10

- Coming up with a business plan
- Finances
- Investors
- Red tape

READ: The Startup of you, Part 7

READ: Art of the Start: Chapters, 7, 11 and 12

READ: The Startup of you, Parts 5 and 6

READ: The Art of the Start: Chapters 4, 5, and 6

ASSIGNMENT: Edit a peer's business plan, DUE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8

ASSIGNMENT: Finalize and upload your presentation slides DUE SUNDAY, APRIL 12

Week 15

Monday, April 13 – Friday, April 17

PRESENTATIONS 1

ASSIGNMENT: Write your final business presentation PAPER. **DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 24**

1) TO WRITE YOUR PLAN: Answer the questions on the slides in the order I gave them. Literally write a paragraph or two on each point. THAT'S WHAT THOSE POINTS ARE THERE FOR. THEY ARE FOR THE WRITTEN PLAN, NOT THE SLIDE SHOW.

- 2) Do you get it? Like, the slides themselves show you the basic points you should be making in order for YOUR slides, but THEY ALSO show you every question you need to answer in your written plan in the appropriate order. They are like a rubric in a power point.
- 3) There are no late hand-ins, here. Legit, upload it to Canvas on Friday, and make sure it got there. I absolutely do not want to give 0s for a final project.
- 4) I expect most plans will be 4-10 pages, but there is no min-max on this. Write as much or as little as you feel you need.

Week 16

Monday, April 20 – Wednesday, April 22

PRESENTATIONS 2

ASSIGNMENT: Write your final business presentation PAPER. DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 24

1) TO WRITE YOUR PLAN: Answer the questions on the slides in the order I gave them. Literally write a paragraph or two on each point. THAT'S WHAT THOSE POINTS ARE THERE FOR. THEY ARE FOR THE WRITTEN PLAN, NOT THE SLIDE SHOW.

- 2) Do you get it? Like, the slides themselves show you the basic points you should be making in order for YOUR slides, but THEY ALSO show you every question you need to answer in your written plan in the appropriate order. They are like a rubric in a power point.
- 3) There are no late hand-ins, here. Legit, upload it to Canvas on Friday, and make sure it got there. I absolutely do not want to give 0s for a final project.
- 4) I expect most plans will be 4-10 pages, but there is no min-max on this. Write as much or as little as you feel you need.

Week 16

Monday, December 2 – Friday, December 6

- PRESENTATIONS 2

ASSIGNMENT: Write your final business presentation PAPER. DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 24

1) TO WRITE YOUR PLAN: Answer the questions on the slides in the order I gave them. Literally write a paragraph or two on each point. THAT'S WHAT THOSE POINTS ARE THERE FOR. THEY ARE FOR THE WRITTEN PLAN, NOT THE SLIDE SHOW.

- 2) Do you get it? Like, the slides themselves show you the basic points you should be making in order for YOUR slides, but THEY ALSO show you every question you need to answer in your written plan in the appropriate order. They are like a rubric in a power point.
- 3) There are no late hand-ins, here. Legit, upload it to Canvas on Friday, and make sure it got there. I absolutely do not want to give 0s for a final project.
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