

Writing for Mass Communication (MMC 2100) Spring Semester 2021

COURSE SYLLABUS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Lead instructor: Professor Rob
Marino
(Sect. 0089)
Email: through Canvas

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

Sundays: 9-11 p.m.

***It is recommended that you work on your weekly written assignment or finish working on it during the virtual office hours each week.

Professor Marino will be moderating the office hours during the week to provide immediate feedback on each assignment.

The class is structured so you will be writing assignments in addition to taking exams and quizzes working on e-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 e-textbook exercises as well as course handouts.

Additionally, you should be checking your primary email every few days. Professor Marino 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 areas related to mass 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 as well as a demonstration of an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

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
- ☐ the ability to write a well-constructed cover letter and include major relevant sections of a resume
- ☐ the ability to write a press release structured correctly and written towards a specific audience
- ☐ the ability to write captions for photographs that illustrate correct AP Style for cutlines
- ☐ the ability to post blog entries that follow correct journalistic style and employ correct SEO technique through headlines

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. Pearson Revel e-book. ISBN: **9781323817001**

You will need to purchase the access code by following the instructions in the Canvas Start Here module of the course – this is the ONLY way to access the e-book

MMC 2100 will be participating in the UF All Access program for the Spring 2021 semester. Students will have two options to gain access to the required REVEL digital materials. Students will have to choose to “Opt-In” to REVEL access through a link provided in Canvas once classes begin for a reduced price and pay for these materials through your student account. Students who do not choose this option will be able to purchase a standalone code through the UF Bookstore. Both options provide access to the same online materials; however, the discounted price will only be available through the Gator1 Central portal. You can log in to the Gator1 Central portal and view your participating courses when classes begin here: <https://www.bsd.ufl.edu>

(REVEL quizzes are part of your grade in this course. Please have access by the second week of classes.)

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 JOURNALISM 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 4 (Monday Feb. 8) – 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.

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.

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:

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

15 percent – average of THREE (3) exams

10 percent – Pearson Revel Total Score – average of all quizzes completed through the Pearson Revel e-textbook site

10 percent -- “other” assignments***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
- Media law “prompt”
- News Story
- Personality Profile
- PR release
- Photo Essay
- Blog
- Ad Project

HOW WRITTEN MODULE ASSIGNMENTS ARE GRADED

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).

*****REVISION COMPONENT*****

MMC 2100 is structured to include not only faculty-to-student feedback but peer feedback as well. In several written assignments, you will be expected to revise your submission based on feedback received from your section instructor – meaning there will be two deadlines for those assignments: an initial deadline and a final deadline (that includes revisions you made based on the feedback from your section instructor)

*****There will be a –10-point deduction ON THE FINAL GRADE FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT if you do not submit a COMPLETED project by the initial/rough draft deadline*****

Additionally, there will be a –10-point deduction ON THE FINAL GRADE FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT if you submit identical versions of the initial/rough draft and final draft***

You will also have access to all your classmates' submissions on the initial deadline and will be expected to provide brief feedback to TWO classmates.

Criteria for that feedback will be provided for these assignments: personality profile, photo essay, blog and ad project visual portion.

*****Professor Marino will ONLY comment on content issues, NOT stylistic issues (such as grammar and AP Style) – you are still responsible for accurately proof reading for these*****

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, photo essay, advertising copy, etc. General criteria for all assignments include writing style, organization, clarity and appropriateness for topic and audience.

Step Two: Mechanics

There is a Mechanics category in each of your rubrics for all written assignments. Your grade will be partially assessed on the total number of grammatical and AP Style errors *see each rubric in the Canvas module for that assignment*

In addition, the following deductions will be assessed:

-5 points = Misused word (their, there etc.)

- 5 points = Spelling error. Deducted both for misspelled and AND TYPOS. If the same word is misspelled more than once in a story, -5 points will be subtracted only once.

- 10 points = Factual error. This includes inaccurate information and errors or typos in proper

nouns, names, numbers, addresses, dates and quotes.

There will be a sliding scale for fact errors:

In Module 2 written assignment (resume-cover letter), a fact error = -5.

In Module 3 written assignment (media law “prompt”), a fact error = -5.

Beginning in Module 4 written assignment news story, a fact error = -10.

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.

*****NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED ON ANY ASSIGNMENT*****

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.

REVEL TOTAL SCORE/QUIZZES (10 PERCENT) Your quiz grade will be the average of the chapter quiz grades from the Revel e-book. *****See course schedule for dates***** No make-up quizzes will be given. **NO quiz grades will be dropped**

“OTHER ASSIGNMENTS” (10 PERCENT)

This grade includes things such as Module 1 written assignment “prompt” and a media law quiz

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 modules – as well as your module written assignments -- will be open for a minimum of SEVEN (7) days, but several will be open for at least TWO WEEKS.

☑ 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 or for leisure purposes 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*****

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://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-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)

IMPORTANT DATES

Drop-Add: January 11-15, 2021

Last day to withdraw with no fee liability: January 15, 2021

Last day to withdraw with 25 percent refund: February 5, 2021

Last day to withdraw and receive a “W”: April 9, 2021

MMC 2100: WRITING FOR MASS COMMUNICATION TENTATIVE MMC 2100 COURSE OUTLINE/ SPRING 2021

Orientation and Module 1: Writing Prompt & Grammar: (Jan. 11-24): *All Module 1 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Jan. 24**

Course overview. Review syllabus. Revel e-book quizzes: Chapter 1: Sit Down and Write. Chapter 2: Basic Tools of Writing. Download, review Grammar refresher from Canvas. Syllabus quiz.

Module 1 written assignment: written “prompt” ***this grade will count as part of the “other assignments” portion of your overall grade (10 percent)

Module 2: Resume/Cover Letter (Jan. 25-31): *All Module 2 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Jan. 31**

Revel e-book quiz: Chapter 13: Getting a Job in the Mass Media.

Module 2 written assignment: Resume/Cover Letter.

Module 3: Media Law: (Feb. 1-7): *All Module 3 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Feb. 7**

Revel e-book quiz: Chapter 12: The Writer and the Law.

*****Exam #1: Media Law (Chapter 12): “OPEN PERIOD”: Thursday Feb. 4 at 10 a.m. through Friday Feb. 5 at 11:59 p.m.**

Alligator Media Law Quiz due by Sunday Feb. 7 at 11:59 p.m.

Module written assignment: 5-paragraph response to media law “prompt”

*****AP Stylebook must be purchased and in hand BY Monday Feb. 8*****

Module 4: News stories/AP Style (Feb. 8-21): *All Module 3 coursework due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday Feb. 21**

Revel e-book quizzes: Chapter 3: Style and the Stylebook

Chapter 5: Basic News Writing.

Chapter 7: Writing for the Web.

Writing in correct journalistic style. Using the AP stylebook. Using correct copy-editing symbols.

Download, review AP Style Resource Sheet from Canvas. Inverted pyramid. Nut graph.

Direct/indirect quotes.

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 Feb. 21 (-10 point deduction if profile memo is not submitted by this time)**

Module 3 written assignment: write a News Story from information provided.

*****EXAM #2: (course handouts, Revel e-book CHAPTERS 1-7) – “OPEN PERIOD”: Thursday Feb. 18 at 10 a.m. through Friday Feb. 19 at 11:59 p.m.*****

Module 5: Personality profile (TWO PARTS) – Part A: interview portion (Feb. 22-28)

Revel e-book: Chapter 6: Writing for Print Journalism (Feature Writing)

*****NO Revel e-book quiz this week, but closely review portion indicated*****

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 Feb. 28. (-10 point deduction if survey is not submitted by this time).

Personality profile—Part B: writing/revision portion -- (March 1-7)

MANDATORY personality profile rough draft of first “200 words” to be submitted by 11:59 p.m.

Friday March 5 -- submit the first 250 words of your profile and comment on TWO of your classmates’ profiles by that time to receive full credit.

*****From March 6-7 you MUST make revisions to your profile based on feedback you receive from your peers and Professor Marino*****

FINAL PERSONALITY PROFILE DEADLINE: Sunday March 7 by 11:59 p.m.

Module: Public Relations (March 8-14) *available through Modules*****

Pearson Revel e-book quiz: Chapter 11: Writing for Public Relations.

Different aspects of a PR/media release.

Module 6 written assignment: write a PR release from information provided.

Photo essay memo instructions available beginning Monday March 8

Photo essay memo submitted to Canvas by Sunday March 14 (-10-point deduction if not submitted by this date)

Module 6: Photo Essay (March 15-28)

Revel e-book quiz: Chapter 9: Writing and Images.

Create Tumblr account once receive photo essay topic approval from Professor Marino.

Photo essay instructions

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

Friday March 26 – submit rough draft of your photo essay and comment on TWO of your classmates’ photo essays by that time to receive full credit.

*****From March 27-28 you should make revisions to your photo essay based on feedback you receive from your peers and Professor Marino*****

FINAL PHOTO ESSAY DEADLINE: Sunday March 28 by 11:59 p.m.

Blog instructions available beginning Monday March 22

Blog memo submitted to Canvas by Sunday March 28 (-10 point deduction if not submitted by this date)

Module 7: Blogging (March 29-April 11)

No Revel e-book quiz this week, but closely review portion from Chapter 7 on 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 April 9 – submit rough draft of your blog and comment on TWO of your classmates' blogs by that time to receive full credit.

From April 10-11 you should make revisions to your blog based on feedback you receive from your peers and Professor Marino

FINAL BLOG DEADLINE: Sunday April 11 by 11:59 p.m.

Ad project directions available beginning Monday April 5

Ad project memo must be submitted by Sunday April 11. (-10-point deduction if not submitted by this date)

Module 8: Advertising (April 12-21):

*****Ad project memo MUST BE approved by Professor Marino prior to beginning ad project*****

Revel e-book quiz: Chapter 10: Writing Advertising Copy.

Ad Project/instruction. Two parts = written portion + visual portion.

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

Sunday April 18 – submit rough draft of your ad project and comment on TWO of your classmates' visual portions by that time to receive full credit.

From April 19-21 you should make revisions to your ad projects based on feedback you receive from your peers and Professor Marino

FINAL AD PROJECT DEADLINE: Wednesday April 21 by 11:59 p.m.

*****EXAM 3 (CHAPTERS 9-10) "OPEN PERIOD": Tuesday April 20 at 10 a.m. through Wednesday April 21 at 11:59 p.m.**

*****NO FINAL EXAM*****

