MMC 6960c — Sec 6960. Class #28686.
Professional Master's Seminar

Prof. Calienes (calienes@ufl.edu)
Office: WEIM 3059

Tuesdays: Period 6 (12:50 PM - 1:40 PM)
Wednesdays: Periods 4-5 (10:40 AM - 12:35 PM)
Office Hours: To be arranged

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the College of Journalism's Professional Master's Program and provides a structure to kick-off your individual capstone project.

The course includes a combination of lectures and insightful presentations by guest speakers. During the semester, students will also complete writing exercises meant to develop their writing skills for a variety of professional settings.

Upon successful completion of the course, students are expected to have crafted an approved project proposal, established a viable timeline, and identified a chairperson to guide them through their capstone project over the next two or more semesters. This comprehensive preparation ensures that students are well-prepared to embark on their individual projects with a clear roadmap for success.

The Professional Master's capstone project is an advanced-level project that requires that students apply and demonstrate the knowledge and skills gained in their academic coursework. These projects are meant to be the culmination of your graduate studies showcasing a breadth of integrated knowledge and professional-level work in one or more areas within the field of communications.

Students will work individually and have the opportunity to explore a variety of topics and media for delivering their project. Through this process, each student will select and work with a committee of experts from the College of Journalism and Communications, including a Chair and one additional member that will guide their work over a minimum of two semesters (6 credit hours) of MMC 6910 Supervised Research.

Developing a sufficiently focused project can be difficult, particularly when one is passionate about their chosen topic. Students often attempt to tackle too much, such as addressing a problem that is overly broad, complex, and time-consuming to resolve within a few months. The project might instead focus on a specific "segment" of the larger puzzle, perhaps completing the initial approach. The advantage of identifying a professional problem is that you can continue refining it even after graduation. Your completed project should be a source of pride when presenting to prospective employers.

Course Objectives

- Explore and examine project topics through a variety of creative processes
- Demonstrate writing ability for a variety of professional settings
- Analyze and implement a variety of techniques to improve writing ability
- Evaluate and critique project proposals of peers, provide constructive feedback
- Propose a well-crafted, viable proposal for a professional capstone project
- Formulate a professional level project proposal and choose a committee chair to guide your project
- Develop professional communication skills while presenting ideas, as well as providing constructive feedback to others

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Course Expectations

Assignments

Assignments will be posted to Canvas and are meant to help you make progress on your topic selection and formation of your project proposal. During this semester we will discuss scale and scope of the project, as well as skills that will be necessary for you to acquire prior to completing and successfully defending your project. To determine if the scope of your project is manageable, it is useful to list and describe the major steps that will be required to complete the project and to develop a realistic timeline. It will also be helpful to discuss your project needs and the skills that you will need to learn through courses or professional guidance from faculty, staff, etc. that can help you define and set attainable goals for completion. Keep in mind that all of the assignments build upon each other and are meant to keep you moving forward. Throughout the semester, you may find it necessary to re-submit assignments as needed if it serves to improve your proposal and/or project. You should see this as an opportunity rather than a challenge. Keep in mind that if you do not complete the requirements of this course, you may be required to re-enroll at a later date.

Select writing exercises will be assiged throughout the semester to provide students with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of professional communication effectively. Assignments serve a dual purpose: they aim to cultivate a higher standard of written communication while also reflecting the advanced academic and professional expectations of the program, thus preparing students for real-world scenarios. Students will be tasked with constructing compelling arguments that engage and influence their intended audiences, honing their ability to craft narratives that effectively drive their points home. A strong emphasis on professionalism underscores the writing in this course, and students are expected to adhere to elevated communication standards in line with professional norms. .

The final outcome and requirements for successful completion of this course include:

1. Capstone Project proposal, timeline and plan for completion

2. Various writing assignments and peer review

3. Identification of Chair (required) and/or Committee members (optional, your additional committee members may be selected the following semester)

To successfully complete this course, students will present their capstone project proposals in a professional manner that would be acceptable in an industry setting. These presentations may happen outside of class time, but details will be provided and agreed upon prior to scheduling.

Grading

Course Grade Breakdown

40%	Project Proposal & Proposal Presentation
40%	Online discussions, writing and other assignments related to project development
20%	In-Class Participation, professionalism & attendance

Course Grading Scheme

A	100% to 94%	C	< 77% to 74%
A-	< 94% to 90%	C-	< 74% to 70%
B+	< 90% to 87%	D+	< 70% to 67%
B	< 87% to 84%	D	< 67% to 64%
B-	< 84% to 80%	D-	< 64% to 61%
C+	< 80% to 77%	E	< 61% to 0%

https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/

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Course Policies

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory. Please plan to attend all meetings as attendance is necessary to continue making progress throughout the semester. Students will be allowed one (1) unexcused absence during the semester, additional absences will affect your final grade in this course. Since we will be sharing work, participation in class discussions and providing your classmates with feedback is essential for your success in this course. If you are not able to attend a class meeting for a serious reason, please notify me before class via Canvas or Email and refer to the UF attendance policy on excused absences here: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/

Class Format
Weekly meetings will predominantly take place in person during our scheduled Wednesday two-hour sessions and via Zoom on Tuesdays. Classes will encompass a diverse range of activities, including lectures, student presentations, discussions, and guest speaker sessions. It is imperative that students maintain a professional demeanor, whether offering feedback to peers or interacting with guest speakers.

In this course, you will be regarded as professionals, and a high level of engagement and active participation during class is expected. Students are required to conduct themselves with professionalism and respect at all times. Disrespectful behavior towards classmates or guest speakers will not be tolerated, and students may be asked to leave the class if such behavior is observed. Being asked to leave class will be considered as an absence for the day. Your commitment to maintaining a positive and professional learning environment is crucial for the success of the course.

Academic Integrity
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:/ /sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-codestudentconduct-code/ UF Plagiarism Policy Plagiarism Definition - A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:
- Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authorized by the student.
- Unauthorized use of materials or resources.
- Prohibited collaboration or consultation.
- Submission of paper or academic work purchased or obtained for an outside source. For UF's Plagiarism Policy visit http:/lregulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf
- If you have any questions or concerns if it qualifies for plagiarism, just ask!

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "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." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructors in this class.

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University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Student Resources

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392- 1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Students will be required to use various databases found in the library and used by industry professionals, such as, AdSpender, Census Bureau, Demographics Now, Hoovers, IBISWorld, MarketReseardi.com, Mintel, Simmons, Simply Analytics, Statista, etc.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420.

General study skills and tutoring. Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.

Health and Wellness Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575, or visit UMatter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

University of Police Department: 352-392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center, 392-1161 University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or police.ufl.edu

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Proposed Schedule

(Schedule is tentative and will change as needed.
Please refer to Canvas for the most updated schedule)

INTRODUCTION   WK 1 (1/8) - WK 4 (1/29)

Introduction to Capstone Process, Resources & Committee Selection, Exploring Topics
& Mindmapping, Deliverables, Project Examples

DEVELOPMENT   WK 5 (2/5) - WK 9 (3/4)

Small Group Discussions, Guest Speakers, Mindmap Presentations, IRB

FINALIZING   WK 10 (3/11) - WK 16 (4/22)

Proposal Writing, Guest Speakers, Individual Feedback, Scheduling & Managing Timelines.
Note: Proposal presentations will be held the final week of class.

Note: No Class the week of 3/11 for spring break
Guest speakers will be arranged as available and updated to the schedule.