Multimedia Writing

JOU3109C / 3 credits

Instructor: Michael Stone   **Email:** michaelstone428@gmail.com

Contact

You're welcome to contact me via Canvas or email. You'll get a response within 48 hours on weekdays, though I'll likely get back with you sooner. I am also available to meet remotely, such as on Fridays from 3 to 5 p.m. (office hours) or at another time if you'd like to schedule one.

Course Description

Multimedia Writing introduces journalism, public relations and broadcast writing as well as the use of multimedia tools in gathering and presenting information. Other, more specific skills you'll learn are interviewing techniques, AP style and judging the potential newsworthiness of a story.

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, broadcast scripts and Twitter.
- How to take photos that follow basic photojournalism rules. You will demonstrate your photography skills in a photo essay.
- Best practices for creating a professional digital portfolio.
- 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 e-Learning. You can access the course by logging into e-Learning 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* (8th edition). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

- 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, follow these instructions:

  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

- 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.

Recommended Texts

- Straus, J. (2014). _The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation_. (11th edition). San Francisco, CA: Wiley

  - Readings will be suggested from this text throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, an extra credit quiz on grammar and punctuation will be offered.

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 e-Learning 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.

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 be accepted only in cases of documented emergencies and illnesses and on a case-by-case basis. You MUST email the instructor within 24 hours of the assignment being due to request an extension or make-up, and you must submit your documentation to the Dean of Students Office, not the instructor, and follow the office's

process (see the course's Frequently Asked Questions page on Canvas for the link). The office will then email the instructor your excuse letter, which includes the dates you are excused from class, and that number of days will be added onto the end of the missed assignments' deadlines. This process for excused absences is applied fairly and consistently regardless of circumstance.

Any request to make up an assignment due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by a ticket number from UF's e-learning Support Services or UF's HUB Office. 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 a 10 percent deduction **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 e-Learning, 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 feedback to the class on 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 due.**

Plagiarism

You may not turn in work that is not your own, including work generated by Chat GPT or other AI programs. These and other forms of plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Any such attempt to represent the work, ideas, or writing of someone or something else as your own is considered plagiarism and will result in failure of the assignment and potentially of the course, along with other consequences, such as from the Office of the Dean in accordance with University Policy. In other words, all work submitted for this class must be your original work. You also may not reuse assignments created for other purposes, including other courses. When you use

information from elsewhere, you should cite it appropriately. If you have any questions regarding this policy, ask. "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/

Remote Video Disclaimer

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students to refer back to and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. Those who are unwilling to consent to having their video or profile image recorded should keep their camera off and not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. Those who are not willing to consent to having their voice recorded should keep their mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the chat feature, which allows questions and commenting live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

GETTING HELP

For issues with technical difficulties for eLearning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk (A.K.A. UF's Hub and E-learning Support Services) at:

Email: helpdesk@ufl.edu (or) learning-support@ufl.edu
Phone: (352) 392-HELP (4357)
FAQs for Students: https://kb.helpdesk.ufl.edu/FAQs/E-Learning

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.

<u>GRADING POLICIES</u>

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 2, 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.

<u>Grading Scale</u>
Final averages ending in .5 or higher will be rounded to the next whole number: 69.5 to a 70, 76.7 to a 77, etc., but **not** 69.4 to a 70.

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		

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module	Topic	Assignments
Start Here	How to be a successful online student	• DB: Introductions • DB: Preparing to be an online student • Quiz: Syllabus • Purchase textbooks and subscribe to *The New York Times*
1	Storytelling and News Values	• AS: Qualities of News • DB: Distinguishing between factual and opinion statements
2	Story Organization and The Basic News Story	• DB: Find the focus of a story • Quiz: AP Style Part 1 • AS: Practice writing a hard-news story & Peer Review • AS: Write a hard-news story
3	Writing Leads	• DB: Identifying summary leads, soft leads, and nut graphs • Quiz: AP Style Part 2 • AS: Practice writing a news-feature story & Peer Review • • AS: Write a news-feature story
4	Interviewing Techniques and Writing a Profile Story	• DB: Writing open-ended interview questions • AS: Personal Profile Memo • AS: Practice Profile Story Workshop • AS: Profile Story
5	Online Journalism and Writing for Social Media	• DB: Multimedia and Story Structure in Online News • AS: Set up a Twitter account and live-tweet a current event
6	Reporting and Writing Your Own Story	• DB: EHST Story Pitch • Extra Credit AS: Reporting Simulation • AS: EHST Story
7	Writing for Broadcast (Part 1)	• DB: Planning a Broadcast Story • AS: Print Story Versus a Broadcast Story
8	Writing for Broadcast (Part 2)	• DB: Write a Broadcast VOSOT • AS: Write a Broadcast VO, VOSOT, & Package
9	Writing for Public Relations (Part 1)	• AS: Practice Writing a News Release & Peer Review • AS: Writing a News Release for an Event
10	Writing for Public Relations (Part 2)	• DB: Pitch Kickstarter Product for News Release • AS: Product News Release
11	Professional Portfolio	• AS: Resume • AS: Professional Portfolio • Extra Credit Quiz: Grammar and Punctuation Quiz

Disclaimer

This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance learning opportunities. Such changes, which will be communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.