

Writing for Mass Communication (MMC 2100)
Spring Semester 2015

COURSE SYLLABUS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Lead instructor: Professor Rob Marino

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(x1364 – Professor Marino’s office)

Lab instructor: Mr. Sean McCrory

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Lab Instructor: Mr. David Moore

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Virtual Office Hours: (TBA) ***will be announced through your lab instructor

Canvas: Tests, course announcements, course lectures

***Review MMC 2100 Canvas deadline policy in syllabus

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 such areas as advertising, agriculture communications and technical communications. It is also an introductory course designed to provide basic instruction in writing for print, broadcast 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.

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 broadcast news copy that stresses immediacy and basic news value
- the ability to write advertising copy and commercials that stress a unique selling point through emotional or rational appeal as well as PR material designed to garner public attention
- the ability to write a well-constructed cover letter and include major relevant sections of a resume

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. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 2015.

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.

Other Materials

- Flash memory drive for transporting drafts of required lab assignments
- Reporter's notepad or small notebook for interview notes
- Digital camera for taking photos
- Audio recorder – recommended
- Web Cam and Microphone 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. <http://www.counsel.ufl.edu>

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.

COURSE GRADING:

Your grade will be broken down this way:

75 percent -- average of 10 written module assignments

20 percent – average of FOUR (4) tests

5 percent – average of module quizzes/ “other” assignments ***must be completed while that module is open

ASSIGNMENTS

There are TEN (10) written module assignments that each count 100 points (your final written module assignment grade will be the average of those 10 assignments):

*Resume/cover letter (Module 2)

*Police briefs – two averaged together (Module 3)

*News story (Module 4)

*Online news story (two parts/Module 5)

Personality profile (e-mail memo to lab instructor before end of Module 5/final draft due in Module 8)

Blog (create in Module 7, complete prior to end of Module 9)

*TV broadcast script (Module 8)

Photo essay (assigned in Module 9, due before end of Module 11)

*PR/news release (Module 10)

Soundslides restaurant ad/print ad copy

(ad memo due in Module 10, assignment due in Module 11)

*indicates deadline module assignment – meaning “written assignment” must be complete in a timed, deadline setting during that particular module

HOW WRITTEN MODULE ASSIGNMENTS ARE GRADED

Your grade on most writing assignments consists of the points earned for content minus the points deducted for errors and mechanics. To ensure consistency among written assignments, all instructors use the same grading standards.

NO written module assignments grades will be dropped or curved.

One of the course goals is to make sure all written module assignments are comparable. The lab instructors and Professor Marino meet to discuss the lab assignments and grading. We agree on the

amount of time for deadline writing assignments so ALL students in each section have the same amount of time. All instructors use the same grading standards. Your grade on each writing assignment will consist of the points earned for content minus the points deducted for grammatical errors and mechanics. There will be a grammar review in Module 1; however, you are also expected to know the basic rules of grammar (i.e. rules for use of commas).

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 most assignments. The criteria vary depending on the particular lab assignment — news stories, news releases, advertising copy, etc. General criteria for all assignments include writing style, organization, clarity and appropriateness for topic and audience.

Step Two: Mechanics

After determining the content grade, points will be deducted for grammatical errors, spelling errors, factual errors and AP style errors. The points are deducted as follows:

- 2 points = first two grammar/punctuation errors then -5 points for each grammar/punctuation error starting with third grammar/punctuation deduction.

- 5 points = AP style errors.

- 5 points = Failure to prepare copy correctly.

- 15 points = Spelling error. Deducted both for misspelled words and typos. If the same word is misspelled more than once in a story, 15 points will be subtracted only once.

- 50 points = Factual error. This includes inaccurate information and errors or typos in proper nouns, numbers, addresses, dates and quotes. In Module 2, a fact error = -15. In Module 3, a fact error = -25. Beginning in Module 4, a fact error = -50.

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.

FOUR (4) EXAMS (20 PERCENT)

Exam One (100 points)

Exam Two (100 points)

Exam Three (100 points)

Exam Four (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.

AVERAGE OF FOUR (4) POP QUIZZES (5 PERCENT)

Your quiz grade will be the average of FOUR pop quiz grades.

Announced pop quizzes will be available as part of Modules 1, 2 and 12 -- and there will be ONE additional quiz in a TBA Module during the semester.

No make-up quizzes will be given. NO quiz grades will be dropped.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

There are three extra credit opportunities:

1. Complete “Cleaning Your Copy” on <http://newsu.org> (except Style section) and send a course report to your lab instructor prior to Module 3 (10 points)
2. Syllabus Quiz (Module 1)
3. Practice police brief (Module 3)
4. Possible other TBA assignments

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.

- Each of the 12 modules – as well as your module written assignments -- will be open for a minimum of seven (7) days.
- It is expected that you complete ALL assignments for each module in that specified time period.
- LATE submissions for any classwork in MMC 2100 WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
- Once the Canvas deadline closes for each assignment, NO further submissions will be allowed.

Cases of serious illness or family or medical emergency will be determined on an individual basis by Professor Marino – NOT your lab instructor. However, because there is a “7-day open window” for all assignments, ONLY extreme emergency circumstances with documented medical proof will be considered.

Attending an out-of-town trip for a UF club or athletic team during the week an assignment is due or temporarily losing Internet access 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 to you to find an alternative location to submit your assignment – and NOT wait until the last few minutes when you have limited submission options.

COURSE EVALUATION

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/>

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://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-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)

You can read about issues related to academic dishonesty in the College of Journalism and Communications at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/jou/honesty/>

IMPORTANT DATES

Drop-Add: Jan. 6-9 and Jan. 12, 2015

Last day to withdraw with no fee liability: Jan. 12, 2015

Last day to withdraw with 25 percent refund: Jan. 30, 2015

Last day to withdraw and receive a "W": April 10, 2015

UF Spring Break: Feb. 28-March 8, 2015

TENTATIVE MMC 2100 COURSE OUTLINE/ SPRING 2015

Module 1 (Jan. 6-18):

Course overview. Review syllabus. Chapter 1: Sit Down and Write. Chapter 2: Basic Tools of Writing. Grammar refresher. Appendix B & C. Grammar practice exercises. Grammar pop quiz 1. Extra credit syllabus quiz. Practice module written assignment.

Module 2 (Jan. 19-25):

Chapter 3: Style and the Stylebook and Chapter 13: Getting a Job in the Mass Media. Writing in correct journalistic style. Using the AP stylebook. Appendix A. Using correct copy-editing symbols. AP style practice exercises. AP Style pop quiz 2. Module 2 written assignment: resume/cover letter #1.

Module 3 (Jan. 26-Feb. 1):

Chapter 5: Basic News Writing. Writing police brief. Inverted pyramid. Nut graph. Practice extra credit police brief. Module 3 written assignment: police brief #2.

Module 4 (Feb. 2-8):

Continue Chapter 5. Writing longer news story. Direct/indirect quotes. Module 4 written assignment: news story #3.

Module 5 (Feb. 9-15):

Chapter 6: Writing for Print Journalism (Feature Writing). Begin personality profile assignment: profile memo. Chapter 7: Writing for the Web. How to write an online news story and best news Web sites. Social media networks. Module 5 written assignment: online news story (two versions) #4.

*****TEST 1 "OPEN PERIOD" FEB. 13-15. (CHAPTERS 1-7, APPENDIX A, B, C).**

Module 6 (Feb. 16-28):

Chapter 6: Writing for Print Journalism (Feature Writing). Conduct interview with personality profile partner through Canvas Conferences. ***No Module 6 written assignment this week.

*****UF SPRING BREAK: FEB. 28-MARCH 8*****

Module 7 (March 9-15):

Chapter 7: Blogging. Blog assignment instructions. Email blog memo to lab instructor. Create Tumblr blog once receive blog topic approval from lab instructor. Module 7 written assignment: submit personality profile #5. Submit personality peer review survey.

Module 8 (March 16-22):

Chapter 8: Writing for Broadcast Journalism. Make blog posts. Module 8 written assignment: TV broadcast script writing #6.

*****TEST 2 "OPEN PERIOD" MARCH 20-22. (CHAPTERS 6-8).**

Module 9 (March 23-29):

Chapter 9: Writing and Images. Photo essay instruction. Module 9 written assignment: blog #7.

Module 10 (March 30-April 5):

Chapter 11: Writing for Public Relations. Module 10 written assignment: PR/news release #8. Submit ad memo to lab instructor.

Module 11 (April 6-12):

Chapter 10: Writing Advertising Copy. Ad project/Soundslides instruction. Module 11 written assignment: photo essay #9.

*****TEST 3 "OPEN PERIOD" APRIL 11-12. (CHAPTERS 9-11).**

Module 12 (April 13-22):

Chapter 12: The Writer and the Law. Alligator media law pop quiz #4. Module 12 written assignment: ad project/Soundslides #10.

*****TEST 4 "OPEN PERIOD" APRIL 20-22. (CHAPTER 12).**