

Writing For Strategic Communication

COMM 2321

Fall 2019

Meeting Times: Tuesday, Thursday 11:10-12:30 p.m.

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Office: Journalism 325

Office hours: Please email or call if these times don't fit with your schedule. I'm happy to work with you to find time to meet.

Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1:00-2:30

Course Overview

Strategic communication can't work if you can't write. This course breaks down key components of successful strategic communication writing: business (getting and keeping the work), news, public relations and digital copywriting.

We will also discuss specialized research in each genre to make sure your work reaches the proper audience on appropriate platform. Completing this in an ethical and legal capacity will be a constant theme throughout the term.

Learning to write factually, concisely and on deadline takes practice. The more you do it, the better and faster you become. This is a high-intensity course designed to prepare you for the deadlines and forms of writing required in a professional environment. Opportunities for writing a variety of types of copy for print, broadcast media, web and public relations will be incorporated into the assignments. This course also will give you an appreciation for the importance of being a strong editor and giving constructive feedback to other writers.

We will also demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relations to media communications. In addition, we will demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

Course Objectives

- Learn fundamental concepts of news gathering and news writing and understand how these translate into other professional areas of communication
- Strengthen ability to write factually, concisely and effectively, and to help others do the same through strong editing
- Develop proficiency in Associate Press Stylebook rules and application
- Improve ability to effectively manage time and balance multiple tasks
- Prepare for writing and copyediting tests required by most employers
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Demonstrate professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

Course Format

Class sessions may include, but are not limited to, discussions, team exercises, article critiques, reviews of online materials, lectures, guest speakers and out-of-class lab work.

Texts

- Dennis L. Wilcox. Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques, Edition: Seventh Edition. Publisher: Pearson [ISBN: 0205648282]. 9780205211678 This is optional, but I think it's worth the investment and the type of book you would keep.
- Writing for Strategic Communication Industries. This book is free; you can download it here. <https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/stratcommwriting/>
- The Associated Press Stylebook. I hope you already have one.

Submitted Work Format (MANDATORY)

I've worked with dozens of clients. They all have their own format. Because they pay me, I follow their format. Because I don't want you to receive unnecessary criticism at your dream internship or job, you should learn how to follow formatting.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments will follow this format: Arial font, 12 point, single-spaced, double-spaced between paragraphs, black text color. Submit all assignments through Carmen. I will not open and read assignments anywhere but Carmen.

File Naming Protocol: studentlastname--assignmentname. (For example, student Jane Smith is turning in the draft of her news release. Her file should be named: smith--newsrelease)

If submitted work doesn't follow this format, there will be an automatic deduction of ten percentage points.

Attendance and Participation

I take attendance every class. Students who regularly attend and are active in class do better.

As presented in the university's "Academic Policies and Procedures," university-excused absences include "illness, death in the immediate family, religious observance, jury duty, and involvement in University—sponsored activities." Discuss any situation with the instructor, and every effort will be made to assist in this requirement.

Let me stress this again. If there's an issue with physical health, mental health, work, or a job interview, let me know once the problem arises, not after the fact.

I close the doors to class five minutes after the class begins. When the door is closed, don't come in. Employers encouraged me to promote promptness, and this is my way of doing that.

Mental Health Statement

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24 hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445 / National: 800-273-8255); or text (4hope to 741741); or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Late Work, Missing Work, Make-ups and Extension Requests

Work must be submitted by the assigned deadline. In the real world, deadlines matter. If work is due at 11:59 and it is submitted to 12:00, it's late. The only extensions I offer involve the attendance and health policy in the above paragraph. Work will be downgraded ten percentage points for every day late, including weekends.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Don't. This class is about creating original work. It's OK to collaborate with others in proofreading your original work. You can't collaborate on drafting assignments or taking quizzes.

Many of you will work with organizations that have established content. You can't submit that content as your own.

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend you review

the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentconduct.osu.edu/page.asp?id=1>) and with "Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity" (<http://oaa.osu.edu/coamtensuggestions.html>).

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know via email immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu ; 614- 292-3307; slds.osu.edu ; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Additional Support:

The Writing Center offers free help with writing at any stage of the writing process for any member of the university community. During our sessions, consultants can work with you on anything from research papers to lab reports, from dissertations to résumés, from proposals to application materials. Appointments are available in-person at 4120 Smith Lab, as well as for online sessions. You may schedule an in-person or online appointment by visiting WCOOnline or by calling 614-688-4291. Please note that the Writing Center also offers daily walk-in hours—no appointment necessary—in Thompson Library. You do not have to bring in a piece of writing in order to schedule a writing center appointment. Many students report that some of their most productive sessions entail simply talking through ideas. Please check out our Individual Writing

Support and Group Writing Support pages for the types of consultations we provide. We also maintain a Writing Resources page with writing handouts and links to online resources

Grading

There is a writing rubric for each assignment that you can find on Carmen. I evaluate written materials on their conciseness, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, logic and persuasion. Please note: This class adheres to AP Style. Misspellings, fact errors, poor sentence construction, grammar and style mistakes will have the following consequences.

- Proofreading matters. Every grammar, punctuation, and AP Style mistake will result in at least a two-percentage point deduction from your grade.
- Issues with content development, logic flaws, lack of research or other structural issues will result in at least a four-percentage point deduction.
- I list steps for every assignment in the PP and in class. If you miss a step, you will lose at least a letter grade.
- Misspelling of any name results in an automatic F.

This is a more general guideline for how I review written work.

Here are some guidelines are for how your work will be evaluated:

- 100-90 With a few minor edits, piece could be sent as is.
- 89-80 Moderate editing tightening. Some typos & style mistakes.
- 79-70 Work needs significant editing, revision.
- 69-60 Start over. Piece is sloppy, mistake filled and/or ill conceived.
- 59 and below: Work does not conform to assignment

Assignment	Points
Written Assignments	350
Tests	350
Style Final	100
TOTAL	800 Points

I don't round up on points, and there will be two extra credit opportunities. Here is the grading scale.

- A 93% and higher
- B+ 87-89.9%
- C+ 77-79.9%
- D+ 67-69.9%
- F 0-59.9%
- A- 90-92.9%
- B 83-86.9%
- C 73-76.9%
- D 63-66.9%
- B-80-82.9%
- C-70-72.9%
- D-60-62.9%

Assignment Overviews:**Extra Credit Opportunity #1:**

Who wants a job after graduation? Networking is the most essential thing you can do to find work in May. LinkedIn is the best digital resource I know to improve your network. You will have a chance to earn a 1% bonus for the following.

- By Friday at 11:59 p.m., please give me how many connections you have now. If not, you lose any chance of getting extra credit. I need to see a number with your connections.
- The final day of class, I will look at your connections again. You don't have to do anything else.
- If you get 50 or more new connections (that's 1 a day) you will get a 1% bonus. It's all or nothing.

Extra Credit Opportunity #2:

Feedback is crucial in our industry. If more than 75% of the class completes the university's SEI evaluation, everyone will receive a 1% bonus for their final grade. I will announce in class when those SEI open and close.

Written Assignments:

My goal in this class is for you to have a writing sample or portfolio in hand when you leave. These writing assignments are opportunities to practice what we talk about in class and implement core skills any strategic communication writer has to have if they want a job in the industry. All assignments and rubrics are located in Carmen.

Tests:

These will be four in class quizzes that will have multiple choice/true false elements and questions where you will rewrite sentences to adhere to AP style and grammar rules discussed in class.

Final:

This will be a final chance to showcase your AP Style and grammar skills in a revision exercise. We will practice this same type of assignment throughout the semester.

Schedule: I have two kids in elementary school. They can and will get sick. Please check your email when I have to deal with class changes.

Week	Topics	Graded Assignments
Weeks 1-3: Module 1: Writing themes that are always in style.	LinkedIn, Professional Communication	Memo due Sept. 10 at 11:59 p.m. Test One Sept. 12 in class
Weeks 4-7: Module 2: Newswriting, attribution, and how you can use both even if you never work for a media outlet.	Newswriting	News Article due Friday Oct. 4 at 11:59 p.m. Test Two Tuesday Oct. 8 in class
Weeks 8-11: Module 3: PR writing and how it can mirror the job application process.	Public Relations Writing News Releases Media Advisory Pitch letters	Press Kit due Friday Nov. 8 at 11:59 p.m. Test Three Thursday Nov 7 in class
Weeks 12-15: Module 4: Current digital writing trends for 2019 and beyond.	Digital Writing Fundamentals Blogging SEO Content Marketing Overview	Blog due Wednesday Dec. 11 at 11:45 a.m. AP Style Final due Wednesday Dec. 11 at 11:45 a.m. This will be a timed test you take online. We will not meet live for the final. This is a hard deadline. If it is late, the score becomes a 0.

SYLLABUS AGREEMENT FORM
COMM 2321:

I, _____, (print name) have reviewed the syllabus, assignment description, tentative class schedule, and course policies within class on _____, 20__ (date) and understand the classroom policies, expectations, and rules as stated in the syllabus, course policies, and class schedule. By signing this form I agree both to comply with the policies outlined and accept the policies and expectations for this course.

The following documents have been reviewed (please initial each one) _____ Syllabus in its entirety including the section on text and class policy, plagiarism and cheating, expectations, attendance, and assignments and grading

_____ Assignment Description
_____ Class Schedule
_____ Other miscellaneous policies

I also understand the tentative nature of this syllabus and that the instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus, if deemed necessary. I will be informed if such modification takes place, in class, via e-mail (using your OSU e-mail address only) and/or on the Carmen site. It is my responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc.

Finally, I agree to care about this class, work hard, have fun and be a good teammate with everyone else in class. This is The Ohio State University. We're not here to be average.

SIGNED : _____

DATE _____

NAME: _____