

# Writing For Strategic Communication

## COMM 2321

### Autumn 2020

Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursday 11:10-12:30

Instructor: Dan Farkas

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Office: Journalism 325

Office hours: They will be virtual Thursday 2-4 Friday 2-4.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://osu.zoom.us/j/91367854288?pwd=V3l5M3F5N2NNTGJORGNWMDg5a0lKZz09>

Meeting ID: 913 6785 4288

Password: 506820

#### 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.

This is a 3-credit-hour course. According to Ohio State policy, students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average. [ASC Honors provides](#) an excellent guide to scheduling and study expectations.

## 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 and Success Tools

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.

Previous distance learning and hybrid courses have provided insights from students on how to improve the learning experience and optimize outcomes. Here are a few tips from previous students to encourage your success in this hybrid course:

- Students kept up with the Schedule and assignment due dates.
- Students made sure they had access to a reliable internet connection.
- Students had access to at least one reliable device and a backup plan in case of a technological issue.
- Students have made plans to back up work. OSU provides free access to data storage through BuckeyeBox and Microsoft One Drive.
- Students reported that completing assigned readings before class helped them to be prepared to follow along with lectures and participate in discussions.
- Students scheduled time to complete activities at a steady pace during the week. Keeping a schedule prevented a last minute rush and kept the workload manageable.
- Students approached the material by thinking about the connections between readings, lectures, and assignments.
- Students followed the instructor's preference for camera and microphone settings during online synchronous meetings.

## Texts

Dennis L. Wilcox. Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques, Edition: Seventh Edition. Publisher: Pearson [0205211674]

[https://www.secondsale.com/i/public-relations-writing-and-media-techniques-7th-edition/9780205211678?gclid=Cj0KCQjw7Nj5BRCZARIsABwxDKLKV\\_KElrQC4vyIY3KcjxhIRMdWR9Cex4OEx9TYxtipiXYETkKEEnEMaAhneEALw\\_wcB](https://www.secondsale.com/i/public-relations-writing-and-media-techniques-7th-edition/9780205211678?gclid=Cj0KCQjw7Nj5BRCZARIsABwxDKLKV_KElrQC4vyIY3KcjxhIRMdWR9Cex4OEx9TYxtipiXYETkKEEnEMaAhneEALw_wcB)

[https://www.amazon.com/Public-Relations-Writing-Media-Techniques/dp/0205211674/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?dchild=1&keywords=Wilcox+7th+edition&qid=1597418751&sr=8-2](https://www.amazon.com/Public-Relations-Writing-Media-Techniques/dp/0205211674/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=Wilcox+7th+edition&qid=1597418751&sr=8-2)

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. You'll use it it COMM 3334 and 4337.

### **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. I use Top Hat because it's easy and can be used live and . [Top Hat help guide](#)

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](http://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](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

## **Academic Integrity Policy**

- **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.
- **Reusing past work:** In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.
- **Falsifying research or results:** All research you will conduct in this course is intended to be a learning experience; you should never feel tempted to make your results or your library research look more successful than it was.
- **Academic Misconduct:** It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

## **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 Interim Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Molly Peirano, at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto: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](mailto:slds@osu.edu) ; 614- 292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://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.

## **Student Services**

Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: <http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>

The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: <http://ssc.osu.edu>

## Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

## Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

## Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Carmen:**
  - Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://carmen.osu.edu). Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit [my.osu.edu](https://my.osu.edu).
  - Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>
  - This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.
    - [Carmen accessibility](#)
- **Secured Media Library**
  - Some of the videos for this course will be posted in the University's Secured Media Library. The link will be posted on the class Carmen page and you will be automatically directed to the correct video.
  - [Secured Media Library](#) help guide
- **Carmen Zoom:**
  - Office hours will be held through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. A separate guide to accessing Carmen Zoom and our office hours is posted on the course Carmen page under Files.

- Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Carmen Zoom for the student to live chat with the professor or TA in the virtual office hours room.
- [Carmen Zoom](#) help guide
- **Turnitin:**
  - Students at The Ohio State University are accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Therefore, you should be familiar with the guidelines provided by the [Committee on Academic Misconduct \(COAM\)](#) and [Section A of OSU's Code of Student Conduct](#) in order to meet the academic expectations concerning appropriate documentation of sources. In addition, OSU has made Turnitin, a learning tool and plagiarism prevention system, available to instructors. For this class, you will submit your papers to Turnitin from Carmen. When grading your work, I will interpret the originality report, following [Section A of OSU's Code of Student Conduct](#) as appropriate. For more information about Turnitin, please see [the vendor's guide for students](#). Note that submitted final papers become part of the OSU database.
- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** [8help@osu.edu](mailto:8help@osu.edu)
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

#### **Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses**

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen

#### **Necessary equipment**

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Web cam and microphone

#### **Necessary software**

- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.
- OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products free of charge. To install, please visit [https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb\\_view.do?sysparm\\_article=kb04733](https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733)



## 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 (Lebron vs. LeBron) results in an automatic F.

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	400
Tests	250
Style Final	150
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      A- 90-92.9%
- B+ 87-89.9%      B 83-86.9%      B-80-82.9%
- C+ 77-79.9%      C 73-76.9%      C-70-72.9%
- D+ 67-69.9%      D 63-66.9%      D-60-62.9%
- F 0-59.9%

**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.

**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 three 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. We're also in a pandemic. Your patience and grace are welcome.**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Graded Assignments</b>
Weeks 1-3: Module 1:  Writing themes that are always in style.	LinkedIn,  Professional Communication	Memo due Friday Sept.11 at 11:59 p.m.  Test One due Sunday Sept. 13 at 11:59 p.m.
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. 9 at 11:59 p.m.  Test Two Sunday Oct 11 at 11:59 p.m.
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 6. at 11:59 p.m.  Test Three due Sunday Nov. 8 at 11:59 p.m.
Weeks 12-15: Module 4:  Current digital writing trends for 2020 and beyond.	Digital Writing Fundamentals  Blogging  SEO  Content Marketing Overview	Blog due Tuesday Dec. 8 at 1:45 p.m.  AP Style Final is also due Dec. 8 at 1:45 p.m.