

COURSE SYLLABUS

CMGT 504: WRITING FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING SPRING 2012

Monday, 6:30 p.m.- 9:20 p.m., ASC 328

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In an increasingly digitized world, the need for solid communication skills has never been greater. The ability to write fluently, to engage disparate audiences with your message, and to present your thoughts in a highly professional and compelling manner are invaluable skills within any corporate structure. In a recent article published by The Conference Board, a senior VP for global recruitment firm Korn/Ferry International remarked: "There's a growing misconception that the proliferation of multimedia technology has diminished the need for strong writing skills, and this is just plain false. At the core of all communications is content. We take a very critical eye toward a candidate's ability to write, whether it's in their resume, their cover letter, or the various samples of work product that reflect the quality of their skills."

This course provides a review of the fundamental skills that constitute excellent writing, as well as hands-on development of a portfolio of written work that can be utilized within any corporate communication environment. The course provides a framework for the development of solidly written pieces via lectures about the craft of writing, analysis of writing samples, and continuous practice in writing and revision.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To understand basic grammatical principles and review fundamentals of good writing.
To develop a unique professional writing style.
To understand and engage in the process of writing.
To develop a diverse portfolio of written marketing and communication samples for students to utilize in real-world communication settings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Four written assignments with attendant revisions, all of which will be included in the student's final portfolio. All assignments will be clearly articulated, and specific instructions and supporting materials will accompany each.
- Minimum of eight other writing assignments, some of which occur during class.
- Group project and in-class presentation on a specific corporate communication scenario.
- In-class discussion of required readings. It is assumed that you have completed the assigned readings prior to class.
- Class participation in group activities is expected and will be a part of your grade. As such, attendance is very important.
- Learning journal.
- Students absent more than once must discuss this in person with the instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Lamott, A. (1995). Bird by Bird. New York: Anchor Books/Random House.

Strumpf, M. & Douglas, A. (2004). The Grammar Bible. New York: Owl Books/Henry Holt.

Kramer, M. & Call, W. (2007). Telling True Stories, A Nonfiction Writers' Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University. New York: Penguin Books.

Clark, R.P. (2010). The Glamour of Grammar, A Guide to the Magic and Mystery of Practical English. New York: Little, Brown & Company.

GRADING/ASSIGNMENTS

In-class writing/class participation/Learning Journal/portfolio corrections	10%
Portfolio writing assignments	60%
Group project	30%

GROUP PROJECT

Select an industry, firm and product your group will work on. You must develop a new product or line extension, and not one that already exists. Your group represents the corporate communication and marketing function at your company. Each member of your group will assume a professional role for the purposes of the presentation: CEO, Vice President of Communication, Public Relations Director, and Marketing Director.

The purpose of this project is to:

Introduce to the market a new product, service, product line, product extension, program, or initiative.

You will decide on the name, if appropriate, brand statement/promise, product attributes, value proposition, fit with company's other objectives, strategic objectives.

The documents you will create as part of your presentation are:

Marketing report--Summary of what you plan to do to market the program/product. In addition to providing industry research (competitors, market outlook, etc.), include target audience, SWOT analysis, mission, strategic objectives, tactics in your report. Must be between 25-30 pages, typed, double-spaced, not including cover page, contents, and any exhibits.

PowerPoint presentation with supporting collateral.

Additionally, you **MUST** include a minimum of three of the following: web site, banner ads, video, promotional materials, merchandising props, printed collateral.

LEARNING JOURNAL

Reflections on your progress in terms of reading and writing in this class, what you are doing differently when you write, what you are aware of, what you have learned. Commentary on writing in general, on other readings you have undertaken as a result of this class experience. Four pages of narrative exposition, double-spaced.

PORTFOLIO WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to several in-class writing and editing assignments, you will be required to produce four different writing assignments. Each of these assignments will be graded, and all must be **corrected** and assembled as part of a final writing portfolio.

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 1 (Feature Article). Due Mar. 19.

Based on in-class mock interviews, write a feature article for the periodical you selected and examined in class. Details on how to write a profile will be covered, as will stylistic attributes associated with your specific publication. Use of direct/indirect quotes, background material, and literary devices is expected. Proper magazine format is required.

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 2 (CEO Message). Due Mar. 26.

Using the corporate scenario provided, write a letter from the CEO to shareholders for your annual report. Employ all instructions provided in-class with respect to tone, format, components contained within a CEO report, inclusive of reporting company highlights, previous year achievements, financial irregularities, restatement of mission/vision, industry and company growth trends, and calls for action.

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 3 (White Paper). Due Apr. 9.

Based on the selection of a particular industry and topic, develop a 10-page White Paper that is either issues-based or benefits-driven. Utilize in-class directions regarding format, style, components contained within White Papers, inclusive of facts, charts, and references.

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 4 (Press Release). Due Apr. 2.

Based on data provided, write a full-length press release. Include relevant facts, quotes, and background to supplement the hard news data that will serve as the primary issue to be announced in the release. Include supplementary sources for reporters as appropriate.

Academic Integrity Policy: The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the SCampus Guide. It is your responsibility to understand and abide by university policies on academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating project data, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself.

Resources on academic integrity can be found on the Student Judicial Affairs Web site (<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS>.) "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism" addresses issues of paraphrasing, quotations, and citation in written assignments, drawing from materials used in the university's writing program.

All academic integrity violations will be reported to the University Student Judicial Affairs office (SJACS) and to the USC Annenberg School for Communication Dean's Office on Student Affairs. Any serious violation or pattern of violations will result in the student's from the Communication program.

Disabilities Policy: Students requesting academic accommodations based on disabilities are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please deliver that letter to me at the start of the semester.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 9:

Course Introduction/The Writing Process

Introduction to the course and overview of strategic organizational writing within a corporate communication environment. Component analysis of the writing program.

Jan. 16: MLK Day/University Holiday

Jan. 23:

Writing Workshop I--Fundamentals of Sound Writing

Readings:

Strumpf & Douglas, Chapter 15, pgs. 406-451, and Chapter 7, pgs. 205-236.

Lamott, Introduction-115.

Clark, Introduction-81.

Jan. 30:

Group Project Work

Feb. 6:

Writing Workshop II--Development of a Writing Style

Analysis of literary devices; in-class writing and editing activities.

Readings:

Lamott, 116-237.

Clark, 82-161.

Feb. 13:

Writing Workshop III—Component Analysis

Readings:

Clark, 162-262.

Feb. 20: President's Day/University Holiday

Feb. 27:
Individual Writing Analyses

Mar. 5:
Writing for Consumer and B-2-B Publications

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 1 (Feature Article). Due Mar. 19.

Mar. 12: Spring Break

Mar. 19:
Corporate Reports and White Papers--A Component Analysis

Readings:

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 2 (CEO Message). Due Mar. 26.
Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 3 (White Paper). Due Apr. 9.

Mar. 26:
Media Relations Writing/Targeting Constituencies

Readings:

Heath, R.L. (2008). Strategic issues management: Theoretical underpinnings for strategic planning and operations in the public policy arena. In Hansen-Horn, T. & Neff, B.D. (Eds.), Public Relations: From theory to practice. Boston: Pearson.

Carden, A.R. (2008). Working with Innovators and Laggards: The diffusion of innovations theory and public relations. In Hansen-Horn, T. & Neff, B.D. (Eds.), Public Relations: From theory to practice. Boston: Pearson.

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 4 (Press Release). Due Apr. 2.

Apr. 2:
Crisis Communication Writing

Readings:

Benoit, W.L., & Pang, A. (2008). Crisis communication and image repair discourse. In Hansen-Horn, T. & Neff, B.D. (Eds.), Public relations: From theory to practice. Boston: Pearson.

Apr. 9:
Oral Presentations: Writing for a Business Audience

Apr. 16:
Perspectives on Writing

Readings:
Kramer and Call, 20 sections.

Apr. 23:
Group Project Presentations

Students will make formal presentations of their group projects.
TURN IN ALL PROJECT MATERIALS/FINAL REPORTS TONIGHT.

FINAL PORTFOLIOS, WITH CORRECTED DRAFTS OF ALL PORTFOLIO WRITING ASSIGNMENTS, ARE DUE FROM EVERYONE TONIGHT.

LEARNING JOURNALS ARE DUE TONIGHT. AS WITH THE FINAL REPORTS, THESE WILL NOT BE RETURNED.

