

COURSE SYLLABUS

CMGT 504: WRITING FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

Spring 2013

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

Anne Framroze

E-mail: framroze@usc.edu

Office Hours: By appointment.

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.

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 /Learning Journal/portfolio corrections/ class participation	15%
Portfolio writing assignments	60%
Group project	25%

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- Regular attendance is essential. If you need to miss class, make sure you clear it first. It is your responsibility to obtain materials, readings and lecture notes from your peers.
- Assignments missed due to any absences must be made up immediately. Late assignments not previously discussed with the instructor will reflect a grade deduction of one full letter grade. Stay on top of your due dates.
- All work done for this course must be done for this course—in other words, you may not use papers from any other courses at any time.

- In addition to your physical presence, it is vital that you also are attentive in class, offering the same courtesy to those around you that you would want yourself. This means you are not to surf the web, tweet, post, read email, check your Klout score, or any derivative thereof. Being virtually present is not an option, and such behavior will have negative results on your grade.
- There are numerous interactive activities in this course; as such, a high level of participation and engagement is expected in order to enrich the experience for yourself as well as your colleagues.

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 removal 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.

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 elements for this project are as follows:

Marketing report—You will produce a detailed report that describes your product or service, and explains your marketing strategy at the point of launch. This report should include the following: executive summary, target audience analysis, SWOT analysis, mission, strategic objectives, budget outline, media distribution/channel analysis, and specific marketing tactics. Your report must be between 25-30 pages, typed, double-spaced, not including cover page, contents, charts, photos, or any exhibits. Provide an appropriate bibliography.

Visual presentation with accompanying print collateral.

A minimum of three of the following: web site, banner ads, videos, unique promotional materials, merchandising props, social and digital elements.

LEARNING JOURNAL

Reflections on your progress in terms of reading and writing in this class; what you are doing differently when you write in this class; what you now are aware of with respect to your writing — In essence, what you have learned thus far. You may provide additional commentary on writing in general, or on other readings you have undertaken as a result of this course . No less than 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. 4.

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. 11.

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 Mar. 25.

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. 8.

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.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 14:

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. 21: MLK Day/University Holiday

Jan. 28:

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.

Feb. 4:

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. 11:

Individual Writing Analyses

Feb. 18: President's Day/University Holiday

Feb. 25:

Writing for Consumer and B-2-B Publications

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 1 (Feature Article). Due Mar. 4.

Mar. 4:

Corporate Reports and White Papers--A Component Analysis

Readings:

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 2 (CEO Message). Due Mar. 11.

Writing Assignment/Portfolio Sample 3 (White Paper). Due Mar. 25.

Mar. 11:

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.

Mar. 18: Spring Break

Mar. 25:

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. 8.

Apr. 8:

Oral Presentations: Writing for a Business Audience

Apr. 15:

Perspectives on Writing

Readings:

Kramer and Call, 20 sections.

Apr. 22:
Writing Workshop III/Readings

Readings:
Clark, 162-262.

Apr. 29:
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 BETWEEN 5:30-6:00 P.M. THESE WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU TONIGHT.

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

