

**Writing for Mass Communication (MMC 2100)**  
**Summer B – 2009**  
**Lecture Syllabus**  
**Course Blog: [www.mmc2100.wordpress.com](http://www.mmc2100.wordpress.com)**

Welcome to Writing for Mass Communication. This course will provide you with a foundation for professional media writing, as well as several “new media” skills being implemented in newsrooms throughout the world. If you are a major in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications, you must earn no lower than a “C” in this course.

**Mrs. Jennifer Cox**

G-035 Weimer Hall

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Office hours: M – 4<sup>th</sup>; T – 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>

My office hours are by appointment only. I will bring a sign-up sheet to each lecture. Please make sure you keep your appointment with me.

You will note that I am giving you Thursdays off from lecture. This omission from the schedule will place a much greater urgency on your attendance in each lecture. Please do not miss class if you can help it.

You will receive a lab syllabus during your first lab meeting containing your lab instructor’s name, office number, phone number and office hours.

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**General requirements for enrollment in MMC 2100**

\* You must have completed the required six hours of English credit, typically ENC 1101 and 1102. You may have fulfilled this requirement through AP exam scores.

\* You must have a strong command of written English. If you have significant problems with grammar or spelling, you must take responsibility for remedying these issues.

Failure to meet these requirements will affect your ability to earn a passing grade in this course.

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**Required text and materials**

- Rich, Carole. (2007). *Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method* (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> ed.).
- *Associated Press Style Book* (2009, 2008 or 2007)
- Kessler, L., & McDonald, D. (2008). *When Words Collide* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson-Wadsworth. [earlier editions are acceptable]
- Access to a digital camera (doesn’t need to be fancy)
- USB key/Flash memory drive (most cost between \$10 and \$15)

## **Attendance**

Due to the pacing of this class, in addition to the abundance of material that will be covered, students must attend both lecture and lab. Attendance will not be taken on a regular basis; however, pop quizzes will be given throughout the semester during lecture.

**Quizzes and assignments that are missed during an unexcused absence cannot be made up.**

## **Classroom procedures and expectations**

- **BE ON TIME** – because we are eliminating Thursdays from the lecture schedule, it is imperative that we begin each class on time.
- Please turn off all cell phones and pagers. No texting or e-mailing during class.
- No food or drinks are allowing in the computer labs. Drinks with caps are permitted in the lecture hall.
- Laptop use – students will be provided computers in lab; laptops are permitted for note taking during lecture, however, students who are off-task will be asked to leave the class.
- Those talking out of turn will be asked to leave lecture

## **Course requirements**

- Students should check their Gator e-mail accounts several times each week.
- Students should check the course blog regularly for updates and information.
- Students must turn in their work on time. If a student needs to turn in work late, he or she must clear it with me first.
- Students who miss lecture are responsible for getting notes from their classmates before attending lab. Each lecture will offer information essential for your success in lab.
- If you are struggling, it is your responsibility to meet with your instructor during office hours before you fall too far behind.

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## **Academic honesty**

Students are expected to do their own work, inside and outside of the classroom. Students are expected to work independently, unless directed otherwise, and they may not claim anyone else's work as their own. Students are also expected to do their own work on in-class assignments or quizzes. Students who are caught cheating or using the work of others will receive a zero on the assignment or quiz.

You are responsible for taking your own notes. The use of commercially produced notes will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the University's Student Conduct Code.

## **Students with special needs**

Any student who requires special assistance with any aspect of this class should contact the **Office of Student Services at 352-392-1261**. Students with special needs should notify the instructor immediately and are responsible for making sure the instructor is informed of any provisions needed. Students who notify the instructor of a special need after an assignment or quiz cannot make up the assignment or retake the quiz.

## Resources:

- **Communication Coaching Center** (1088 Weimer Hall) – Student members of the Journalism and Communications Ambassadors staff the center to provide assistance to students.
- **Computers** – Call 392-HELP for locations and hours of computer labs on campus.
- **College's Library** – The library is located next to Gannett Auditorium in Weimer Hall and has a collection of commercial newspapers and trade publications.
- **Knight Division for Scholarships, Career Services and Multicultural Affairs** (1090 Weimer) – Provides information on scholarships, job fairs and internships.
- **Career Resource Center** – The university provides free testing and counseling about careers. The placement office is in the Reitz Union (392-1601). The contact for our college is Nadine Francis.
- **Division of Student Services** – (392-1261) Contact this office if you need to miss class due to an on-going medical problem or family emergency. The office will notify your instructors of your absence.
- **Counseling Center** – (392-1575) The center provides students with guidance regarding a range of personal issues. <http://www.counsel.ufl.edu>
- **Disability Resources** – (392-1261) Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must meet with your lab instructor and with me to discuss special arrangements.

## Grading

We will not be utilizing the system for minus grades in this course. Students will be evaluated according to the following grading scale:

|            |            |                  |
|------------|------------|------------------|
| A = 100-90 | C+ = 79-77 | D = 60-66        |
| B+ = 89-87 | C = 76-70  | E = 59 and below |
| B = 86-80  | D+ = 69-67 |                  |

- Late assignments will receive a letter grade reduction for each day past the due date.
- Students should keep track of their own grades and should keep all assignments throughout the semester.
- Scores of .5 or higher will be rounded up to the next whole number.

## Lecture grades

The lecture grade counts for 25 percent of your overall grade in the course. Your grade is based on an average of:

- **Average of in-lecture quizzes** (100 points)
  - Four quizzes will be given throughout the semester to encourage you to keep up with the readings and to attend lecture. The lowest of the four quiz scores will be dropped.
- **Exam One** (100 points)
- **Exam Two** (100 points)

\* No make-up exams will be given unless you have an approved excuse and contact me prior to the exam.

## **eLearning**

Students' grades, along with class announcements, will be posted to the college eLearning Web site. The site login is:

<https://elearning.courses.ufl.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct>.

We will not go over quizzes or exams during lecture. If you believe there is a problem with your grade, please see me during office hours.

## **Lab portion of the course**

Your performance in lab is the majority of your grade (75 percent) in the course. You must attend the lab in which you are enrolled. No lab grades will be dropped or curved. You will have opportunities for extra credit. Your lab instructor will go over grading for the lab assignments in more detail during lab one.

## **MMC 2100 – Lecture Timeline**

### **Week 1**

#### **Lecture – Mon., June 29**

Introduction to course, syllabus

Grammar lesson, commas (5 rules to remember handout)

Grammar worksheet

**\*Cleaning Your Copy (must complete by Mon., July 6)**

**Resume preparation (bring to class Tuesday)**

**Read Chap. 23 for Tuesday**

#### **Lab 1 – Mon., June 29, or Tues., June 30**

Short essay (theme: instructor's choice)

Focus on grammar, no AP style

#### **Lecture – Tues., June 30**

Resume workshop

Cover letters

**Read Chap. 2 and Chap. 7 (through p. 135) for Wednesday**

#### **Lecture – Wed., July 1**

Intro to hard news – What is news?

Hard news ledes/AP style

**Practice news story for Monday**

**Read Chap. 5 for Monday**

#### **Lab 2 – Wed., July 1, or Thurs., July 2**

Résumé and cover letter

## **Week 2**

### **Lecture – Mon., July 6**

Collect practice news story

Interviewing

**Hand out reading for Tuesday**

### **Lab 3 – Mon., July 6, or Tues., July 7**

Hard news story from handout

### **Lecture – Tues., July 7**

Old media vs. new media – where is journalism headed?

Reverse publishing

**Read Chap. 7 (p. 136-end) and Chap. 8 for Wednesday**

### **Lecture – Wed., July 8**

Soft ledes/feature stories

In-class: read handout of great lead-ins

**Come with questions for the speaker on Monday**

**Soft lede extra credit due Monday**

### **Lab 4 – Wed., July 8, or Thurs., July 9**

Web hit/hard news story

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## **Week 3**

### **Lecture – Mon., July 13**

Collect soft lede extra credit

In-class speaker for Lab 7 assignment

**Completed story (with 2 UF student sources) due Monday**

**Read Chap. 22 (to p. 476) and sample profile piece for Tuesday**

### **Lab 5 – Mon., July 13, or Tues., July 14**

Soft lede feature from handout

### **Lecture – Tues., July 14**

Profile pieces

Midterm exam review

### **Lecture – Wed., July 15**

**Midterm Exam – bring ID and pencils**

**Read Chap. 3 for Monday**

### **Lab 6 – Wed., July 15, or Thurs., July 16**

Classmate profile

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#### **Week 4**

##### **Lecture – Mon., July 20**

EHS introduction

Finding stories

Blogging

**Read Chap. 17 for Tuesday**

##### **Lab 7 – Mon., July 20, or Tues., July 21**

In-class interview story due: emergency preparation at UF (focus on hurricane season)

Blogging lecture and instruction in lab

Portfolios and interviews begin

##### **Lecture – Tues., July 21**

Guest lecture from Jeremy about EHS writing, getting published and finding stories

##### **Lecture – Wed., July 22**

**No class – e-mail story ideas/progress to lab instructor**

**Read Chap. 10 for Monday**

##### **Lab 8 – Wed., July 22, or Thurs., July 23**

**No lab – work on EHS**

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#### **Week 5**

##### **Lecture – Mon., July 27**

Public relations writing

**Sample press release due Wednesday**

**Read soundslides/video handout for Tuesday**

##### **Lab 9 – Mon., July 27, or Tues., July 28**

EHS Due

Blogs Due

##### **Lecture – Tues., July 28**

Soundslides and videos

**Read photography handout for Wednesday**

##### **Lecture – Wed., July 29**

Collect sample press releases

Photography

**Bring in 10-20 pictures for Soundslides lab**

**Read Dr. Singer's piece for Monday**

##### **Lab 10 – Wed., July 29, or Thurs., July 30**

Press Release

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**Week 6**

**Lecture – Mon., Aug. 3**

Future of journalism

Exam review

**Lab 11 – Mon., Aug. 3, or Tues., Aug. 4**

Evaluations

Soundslides

**Lecture – Tues., Aug. 4**

**Final Exam – bring ID and pencils**

**Lecture – Wed., Aug. 5**

No class

**Lab 12 – Wed., Aug. 5, or Thurs., Aug. 6**

No lab