

COMM 335: Writing Across Platforms Spring 2016 | 3 Credit Hours

Lecture: 01: Location: L10G Time: T/R 1:50-3:05pm

Text: • *Content Rules: How to create killer blogs, podcasts, videos, ebooks, webinars and more that engage customers and ignite your business* by Ann Handley & CC Chapman (ISBN: 978-1-118-23260-6)

The Shepherd bookstore online tool for finding best price on new, used, rentals: <http://shepherd.verbacompare.com/>

Professor: [Matthew J. Kushin, PhD](#)
email: mkushin@shepherd.edu
Phone: 304-876-5361
Office hours: L10K
MW: 11-2pm, or by appointment

Strongly recommended: AP Stylebook.

*You can also purchase online access (temporary) or get ebook versions.

Optional: Public Relations Writing: Form & Style (10th edition) by Newsom & Haynes

Course Documents & Assignments accessible on Sakai: courses.shepherd.edu

Course Overview

Students learn to write effectively across various platforms in today's computer-mediated world. Emphasis is given to clear and effective communication and professional standards as well as the need to tailor the message to the audience and the platform through which it is communicated.

LEAP Goals & ISOs:

#1: Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical & Natural World

- Acquire knowledge in humanities and arts through progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards of performance.

#2: Intellectual & Practical Skills throughout the Curriculum

- Inquiry & analysis
- Creative and creative thinking
- Effectively communicate, in both oral & written English

Competencies

Inquiry & Analysis ▪ Critical Thinking ▪ Oral & Written Communication ▪ Information Literacy ▪ Collaborative Work ▪ Lifelong Learning

Objectives:

This course

- Teaches written persuasion across print and computer-mediated communication.
- Emphasizes research, planning, and audience analysis in the writing process.
- Encourages voice, creativity, and experimentation in writing.
- Explores search engine optimization (SEO) strategies for reaching target audiences.
- Examines key differences and considerations when writing for different platforms.
- Emphasizes written forms of content marketing as part of an organization's social media strategy.

Assessment based on ability to:

Meeting criteria of Written Communication for class assignments as described below

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies and mixing texts, data and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Context of and Purpose for Writing:

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.

Content Development:

- Uses appropriate, relevant and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding and shaping the whole work.

Genre and Disciplinary Conventions:

- Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentations, formatting and stylistic choices.

Sources and Evidence:

- Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.

Control of Syntax and Mechanics:

Uses graceful language and skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency and is virtually error-free.

Tentative Schedule

Note: Readings are to be completed by the date listed. Schedule is subject to change.

Final Exam Date & Time: See Catalog

[Week#] Week of	Day	Topic Assignments in italics are assigned that day. In bold are due that day. Italics & bold indicates assigned & completed same day in class.	Reading Due
[1] 1/11	Tues	Intro to Class; Situating Writing in a Convergent World <i>Set up Writing Challenge Blog by next class</i>	
	Thurs	Legal Considerations; Audience Analysis <i>Poynter's AP online lesson</i>	Newsome & Haynes - Chapter 1, 2, 6 http://bit.ly/WAP_whyjohnnycantwrite
[2] 1/18	Tues	AP; Earned, Owned, & Paid Media Poynter's AP online lesson	Newsome & Haynes - Chapter 3 Complete and bring a print out of your completed quiz: https://www.newsu.org/courses/cleaning-your-copy-grammar-style-more
	Thurs	Elements of The News Release AP Quiz 1: Numbers, Titles, Addresses, and Capitalizations Quiz (in class) Writing Challenge #1: Inverted Pyramid (in class)	Newsome & Haynes - Chapter 7; Chapter 10 (188-201)
[3] 1/25	Tues	Leads Writing Challenge #2: Leads (in class) <i>Non-profit News Release</i> <i>Poynter's Lead Lab</i>	http://bit.ly/WAP_notdead http://buff.ly/VL5srx Newsome & Haynes - Chapter 10 finish
	Thurs	More Practice with News Releases; News Release Lab Time (During Lab time – about 30 mins - we will work on your news release in class)	
[4] 2/1	Tues	Search Engine Optimization & Keywords AP Quiz 2: Possessive, Apostrophe and Commas (in class) Poynter's Lead Lab	http://bit.ly/WAP_WhatisSEOvideo Read through. Click “you be the reporter” and complete the writing a lead task. Print & bring today to class http://www.newsu.org/courses/lead-lab
	Thurs	Formal Critique Day: Bring 1) 1 hard copy to turn in 2) a soft copy draft uploaded to “resources” on Sakai Formal Critique of Partner (in class)	Must be present. If can't be present, must arrange a partner beforehand to get credit for critique portion of assignment.
[5] 2/8	Tues	Keyword Research: Google Trends and Google Keyword Estimator AP Quiz 3: Quotes Due: Non-profit News Release	http://spinsucks.com/communication/content-for-humans-and-bots/ http://bit.ly/WAP_SEOforPR http://bit.ly/WAP_KeywordResearch
	Thurs	Writing Effective Headlines <i>News Release Optimized for the Web (aka, Online News Release)</i>	http://bit.ly/WAP_Headlines
[6] 2/15	Tues	Writing Lab: <i>Work on News Release & “Finding Most Interesting Angle of a News Story”</i>	
	Thurs	Writing Lab: <i>Work on News Release & “Finding Most Interesting Angle of a News Story”</i> “Finding Most Interesting Angle of a News Story” participation due	
[7] 2/22	Tues	Search Engine Result Titles, Descriptions; Content Body Writing Challenge: SEO Title, Description, and a lead paragraph	http://bit.ly/WAP_socialrelease
	Thurs	Optimizing Online News Release: Links and Shareable; Lab Time to work on papers in class	
[8] 2/29	Tues	Owned Content: Content Marketing & the Web	Content Rules – Chapter 1-2

		<i>Participation: Writer's Voice</i> News Release Optimized for the Web (aka, Online News Release)	http://bit.ly/WAP_InsidePRpodcast1 (Podcast - listen)
	Thurs	Voice & Style: Yours & Your Brand's Participation: Writer's Voice Writing Challenge: Film Festival (in class)	Content Rules – Chapters 3-4 http://bit.ly/WAP_whatismCM http://bit.ly/WAP_JPulizzi_video (I strongly encourage you to listen to this interview with Content Marketing Institute founder)
[9] 3/7	Tues	Writing and: Information-Gaps, Hypertargeting, & Consumer identity <i>Participation: BF Analysis</i>	http://bit.ly/1riEDu7 http://bit.ly/1ZeEG7E
	Thurs	Hypertargeting Assignment: Overview, Promotion; Lab Time to work on assignment <i>Hypertargeted Writing Assignment</i> Participation: BF Analysis	
[10] 3/14	Tues	<u>Spring Break – no class</u>	
	Thurs	<u>Spring Break – no class</u>	
[11] 3/21	Tues	Content Hub: Blogging; Lab Day for Working on Web Publication Writing Assignment Hypertargeted Writing Assignment – Promotion Plan <i>WeHeartWV Blog Post Writing Assignment</i> <i>Brand's Voice Worksheet</i> (Hypertarget assignment goes live)	
	Thurs	Guest lecture from Andrew Springer, owner of WeHeartWV.com; Lab Time for Working on Blog Assignment (Hypertargeted assignment still live)	Content Rules - Chapter 11, 19-22 http://bit.ly/WAP_CMandPR
[12] 3/28	Tues	Field Day – Work on Blog Post Content for WeHeartWV Lab open – I will come in to help anyone who wants it. Hypertargeted Writing Assignment – Results Report (even though we're not required to meet, it must be turned in by end of class on Sakai)	Content Rules – Chapters 23-28
	Thurs	Planning Social Posts: Editorial Calendar Brand's Voice Worksheet Writing Challenge: Brand's Voice (in class) <i>Brand's Noteworthy event/activity</i>	Content Rules - Chapter 5-7 http://bit.ly/WAP_excalendar http://bit.ly/WAP_SEOelsewhere
[13] 4/4	Tues	Writing for Social Media: Twitter <i>Social Media Writing (Social Media Calendar) Assignment</i> Brand's Noteworthy event/activity WeHeartWV Blog Post Writing Assignment	http://bit.ly/WAP_MSchaefer_video (I strongly encourage you to listen to this great interview w/ Tao of Twitter author Mark Schaefer)
	Thurs	Writing for Social Media: Facebook	Content Rules – Chapter 18 http://bit.ly/335_FacebookChanges http://bit.ly/WAP_FBwinners http://bit.ly/WAP_FBwritingtips http://bit.ly/WAP_FBWallPostStats
[14] 4/11	Tues	Formal Critique Day: Calendar 1) Bring 1 hard copy of writing assignment to be turned in to	Must be present. If can't be present, must arrange a partner beforehand to

Dr. K; 2) Upload soft copy to Resources on Sakai		get credit for critique portion of assignment.
Social Media Writing (Social Media Calendar) Assignment (uploaded to resources on Sakai) Editorial Calendar Critique (in class)		
Thurs	<u>Spring Recess – no class</u>	
[15] 4/18	Tues White Papers: Position papers & backgrounders; High 5 Awards <i>White Paper Assignment</i>	Content Rules – Ch 13 Newsome & Haynes – Ch 4
Thurs	White Paper Lab Day; 1-on-1 meetings Topic; 5 sources; Stance on issue (hard copy in class or via email)	

Assignments:

AP styles	9% (3% each)
Quizzes (3)	
News U Online Lectures	6% (3% each)
AP	
Lead Lab	
Notebook & Challenges (WC's), Citizenship, Participation Challenges	10%
Formal Critiques of Classmate	8% (4% each)
Professional Writing Assignments	67%
Non-profit news release	9%
News Release Optimized for Web	13%
Hypertargeted Writing Assignment	13%
Blogging Writing Assignment	10%
Social Media Writing Assignment	4% P/I/F
White Paper / Backgrounder	18%

Final Grades: Final grades will be determined with the following scale. There is no rounding:

A =	100-90%	B =	89.9-80%	C =	79.9-70%	D =	69.9-60%	F =	0-59.9%
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All assignments due by the start of class on the due date unless specified otherwise.

Resources

Department Social Media [@shepcomm](https://twitter.com/shepcomm) [instagram.com/sucomm](https://www.instagram.com/sucomm) shepcommblog.wordpress.com
Dr. Kushin [@mjkushin](https://twitter.com/mjkushin)

If you are intent on studying strategic comm, you need to 1) read, and 2) be professionally active on social media. I post and share content related to school, social media, and PR.

- Lists I cultivate:
 - <https://twitter.com/mjkushin/social-media> - General Social Media News
 - <https://twitter.com/mjkushin/shep> - Shepherd and local – play your cards right and you might end up on this list!
 - <https://twitter.com/mjkushin/strategic> - PR, marketing, etc., w/ a bend toward new media.

Accounts Needed

If you do not have an account with the below services, set one up immediately.
Free: Poynter News University @ newsu.org

FAQ

What will we be writing for?

Print, Web (Social media pitch using upgraded PitchEngine.com account), Blogs, Social Media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook), White Paper (Mac Pages - as desktop publishing)

Course Policies

Classroom Environment: Play (mp3 players, games on handheld devices, etc), reading non-course related materials, or working on assignments for other classes is distracting. We're all here to learn and people pay a lot of money for their education. Use of Internet devices to take notes & gather information to inform classroom discussion is strongly encouraged. But browsing & social interaction are not so please minimize use during class. If your use of any device becomes disruptive, it will negatively impact your participation grade. Although I may speak with you about this, do not expect a warning prior to reduction nor for the instructor to inform you that your grade has been reduced. If your ringer goes off during class, please turn it off. If you feel the call may be an emergency, please step out of class.

Participation Grade: A portion of your grade comes from participation. These are not "free" points distributed to students just for showing up. They must be earned. This grade is calculated based on various "participation challenge" assignments I will assign throughout the semester, general participation in classroom discussion and evidence of preparation (e.g., attending class having completed the readings), and the student's contribution to a productive, inclusive and respectful educational environment for the professor and fellow students.

You will note an assignment on Sakai that reads "Classroom Citizenship" – This is there as a reminder that part of your participation grade comes from your citizenship. Your participation grade will be reduced by some or all possible points earned through participation assignments for: excessive tardiness, lack of participation in discussion, distracting device use, and lack of a contribution to a productive, inclusive and respectful educational environment. Students who have completed less than ½ of the participation assignments and who lose all of their participation points, will see an additional reduction to their class grade equal to ½ of the value of the participation portion of the semester grade. Do not expect any warnings.

Attendance, Being On Time, & Leaving Early:

Department Attendance policy: 1 week of classes worth of unexcused absences permitted, full grade deduction for each absence thereafter, and 5 or more is automatic F. Attendance will be taken every class.

You MUST attend your classes regularly and engage in the requirements for each class; otherwise, your financial aid may be revoked either partially or in full. This would result in an amount due by you to the University immediately. Please refer to shepherd.edu/faoweb for more details. If you know you will be missing classes – work with me ahead of time. High-fives will be given to students who miss no more than 2 classes at the end of the semester; two-handed high fives for students who miss no classes.

Class participation is important for the success of the class and to your success. You are expected to attend class regularly and on time and to stay for the duration of class. Students who arrive more than 5 minutes late or leave lecture before it is complete without notifying the instructor prior to the start of class will receive a reduction in their overall attendance & participation grade. Do not expect a warning or notification of grade reduction.

Late assignments: Late means turned in ANYTIME AFTER the end of scheduled class time on the due date. 2 minutes late and 2 hours late are treated equally.

- Professional Writing Assignments: Hard Deadline - Will not be accepted late for any reason.
- Other Assignments: Late assignments will be accepted for a 20% reduction in grade. Late assignments will not be accepted beyond 1 class period late.
- Participation Challenges: Can only receive 50% credit if the student is not present when due; and presentation assignments which cannot be made up). Late assignments will not be accepted beyond 1 class period late.

Students are responsible for remembering to turn in assignments (whether online or in person) prior to end of class on the due date. In the rare case that a student is not able to attend class on the date an assignment is due, the student may submit the assignment electronically BEFORE the end of class on the assigned day for full credit. If you are having email/internet issues, you can fax it to the communication department or slide it under Dr. K's office door. There will be no exceptions to the late assignment policy.

Email & Electronic Communication Policy: I will prioritize & make every effort to respond to communications sent during virtual office hours ASAP. However, for electronic communication occurring outside of established Office Hours:

- ❖ Students can expect to get a response to an email from me within 48 hours of sending it, often much sooner. If you don't hear from me within 48 hours, send a polite reminder.
- ❖ If you send me an email or any other electronic communication and I do not respond to it, then I did not receive it. You will always get a response from me if I received something.
- ❖ Students should not expect responses on weekends or after 6pm.
- ❖ Email subject lines should include: Class Title & Your name. e.g., "Comm 203 – Jane Doe"
- ❖ In case of real emergency needing response ASAP, add "[emergency]" to subject line. Don't abuse this!

Academic Dishonesty. Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Shepherd University Academic Integrity Procedures found in the Shepherd University Student Handbook (<http://www.shepherd.edu/students/studenthandbook.pdf>).

By submitting academic work, students warrant that the work is their own and that unauthorized materials or resources were not used. Plagiarism, fraud, unauthorized use of resources—cheating in all its forms is not tolerated. All members of the Shepherd community are responsible for maintaining their own academic integrity and for reporting suspected academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism is the act of stealing and using, as one's own, the ideas of another or the written expression of the ideas of another. Students guilty of academic dishonesty in any course will receive sanction from the course instructor and may face sanctions by the University, particularly if there is a second reported offense. Sanctions may include dismissal from the University. In this course you will fail any assignment you plagiarize on. Additional sanctions may be taken at the discretion of the instructor including but not limited to reporting the incident to the proper university authorities.

Publication: The department of communication has the right to record, file, broadcast, webcast and publish, through any means necessary, any or all other means of distributing student production work in perpetuity. COMM maintains an archive of material that we may webcast, broadcast, show in theaters and use for the promotion of the department and its students. Any monetary gain made by the department will be used only for the development of the program, and student wellbeing. The students who produce the work also maintain the rights to use their work as they see fit, and are liable for that usage.

Disability Support Services: Disability Support Services (DSS) at Shepherd University facilitates equitable access for every student who self-identifies as having one or more disabilities. Students requesting any disability related accommodation should contact the Director of Disability Support Services in Student Center room 124 or at 304-876-5689. This includes students with disabilities who require academic accommodations, students requesting specific housing accommodations for health-related reasons, and all other disability accommodations. Accommodations must be documented, and accommodation letters from the DSS office must be provided to instructors. For additional information please see <http://www.shepherd.edu/mcssweb/dss/default.html> .