

Writing for Strategic Media

JOUR 7422-001, M50

Fall 2016

Thursday 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Meeman 202/Online

Dr. Stephanie Madden Office: Meeman 312

Office Hours: MW 1 – 2 p.m., Thursday noon – 5 p.m., and by appointment

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Writing for all aspects of public relations and advertising, with a specific focus on writing for audio/visual and social media platforms, including translating one message across multiple technologies and platforms. Focus will be on writing in an active, engaging voice that aligns with the organization's mission and profile.

PREREQUISITE:

Graduate status

REQUIRED BOOKS:

- Handley, A., & Chapman, C. C. (2012). *Content rules: How to create killer blogs, podcasts, videos, ebooks, webinars (and more) that engage customers and ignite your business*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Handley, A. (2014). *Everybody writes: Your guide to creating ridiculously good content*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Additional course readings will be available via eCourseware. A tentative list of readings is included in the syllabus; course readings may be altered during the semester.

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

This is a graduate seminar with lecture and class discussion. Each week, we will discuss a new topic and I and/or designated classmates will be responsible for presenting the class with ideas for debate from the readings or examples from the field, and critically analyze the week's concepts. Please note that failure to attend class or to actively take part – even if all your assignments are turned in on time and done acceptably - will significantly affect your final grade. Be sure you have read the material BEFORE class and come prepared to discuss it.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

I do allow laptops in class for taking notes, accessing readings, or other course-related purposes. I ask that you refrain from checking your email and social media accounts during our class time together. Since graduate classes are largely based on discussion, the quality of the course will be determined by the quality of your contributions to the discussion. This is not only a courtesy to me but to your classmates.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

This is meant as a general guideline to the major assignments within the class. More detail will be provided in class and on eCourseware. Deadlines are also listed in the Class Schedule. All work should be turned in as a Word document via Dropbox in eCourseware unless otherwise noted. All work is due at the start of class, 5:30 p.m. CT on the assigned Thursday, unless otherwise noted.

Reading Blog Posts

During the first half of the semester, you will be asked to respond to the readings in the form of a 500-word blog post. The idea is not to regurgitate the readings but to analyze them by providing insights and comments that demonstrate knowledge and deep thinking about theories, methods, and concepts found in the week's readings. You may make connections to readings from other weeks, connections to something they have read about or learned, either in popular media or another course, among others. The purpose is to interact with the material in such a way as to be prepared to discuss it in class, and to write out your thoughts on the ideas presented. The purpose of this assignment is also to help you develop your voice as a writer throughout the semester. The blog format is designed to allow you maximum flexibility in finding creative, engaging, and fun ways to synthesize the readings and develop killer content.

You will be given a writing prompt the week before each blog post is due to help guide the direction of their writing. You should post their blog in eCourseware using the blog tool and bring a copy (either printed or electronic) to class to remember your ideas and connections during the class discussion. Deadlines are indicated on the course syllabus.

Cleaning Your Copy Quiz

This free self-directed course will help you understand the basics of grammar, spelling, punctuation and AP style. It will also help you brush up on your skills to create clean, error-free copy throughout the semester. You should set aside approximately two hours to complete this online module. The link to the course can be found here: <http://www.newsu.org/courses/cleaning-your-copy-grammar-style-more>

You should successfully complete this course by Thursday, September 22. You should upload a screenshot of the confirmation screen of the course completion to Dropbox.

Organizational Analysis Paper

You will choose one organization and conduct a complete and thorough audit and analysis of your writing efforts. This paper is purely an analysis of what the organization is doing and will not offer suggestions for improvement. This analysis paper will form the first half of the larger strategic media content proposal due later in the semester. More details will be provided in class.

The organizational analysis paper is due on Thursday, October 6.

Unit 3 Class Leading

In groups of 2-3 (depending on class enrollment), you will lead class discussion once at the end of the semester during our *Writing for Strategic Media in Action* unit. Groups will be responsible for leading half of the class, as well as picking out 4-5 readings for their classmates on the assigned topic a week before the class discussion date. Groups will also provide a one-page handout for each member of the class, including me, that highlights the main takeaways from the readings about the topic. I am looking for your group's ability to clearly and concisely articulate the core points of your assigned topic in terms of best practices. Your group should also consider the visual design of the handout. Although not required, groups are encouraged to develop a PowerPoint or Prezi slide to help with their discussion leading and to bring in additional examples not found in the readings.

Twitter Chat

You are responsible for finding one Twitter chat over the course of the semester in which to substantially participate. The chat must be relevant to their professional interests, or relevant to the content they are creating over the course of the semester. Participation requirements are for a one-hour chat (chats of different length may have different participation expectations; if this is the case, please inform me prior to the chat so we can discuss what those expectations will be): 4 unique tweets of more than 5 words each; 3 retweets; 4 direct interactions with other chatters (@ mentions/replies).

You must take screenshots of their contributions and interactions and upload them to eCourseware, along with the relevant information for the chat (date/time, host(s), hashtag used) and, if not clear from the screenshots, their Twitter handle.

You should also write a brief (2-3 pages) paper discussing what you learned during the chat, and how it is relevant to material discussed in this class, and what you feel you gained from interacting with industry professionals in this way.

Participation and paper are due by the last day of class, Thursday, December 8.

Podcast

You will create a 5-6 minute podcast script and recording on a topic of your choice. The topic can be anything of interest to you. The podcast should include an introduction monologue (30-60 seconds), musical jingle (15 seconds), one topic point (3 minutes), closing remarks (1-2 minutes), and closing music jingle (15 seconds). Both the script and the audio recording should be uploaded to Dropbox. More details will be provided for this assignment.

The podcast script and recording are due on Thursday, November 17.

White Paper

You will write a 5-7 page white paper on a single topic related to the core mission of the organization you are analyzing throughout the semester. For example, if you are analyzing an organization focused on the environment, you could write a white paper in support of proposed legislation that would improve environmental regulations in your community. Because white papers serve as authoritative guides that address issues and how to solve them, you are required to include 10 academic sources to support your arguments in this paper. More details will be provided for this assignment.

The white paper is due on Thursday, December 1.

Strategic Media Proposal

Using the organizational audit from earlier in the semester, you will respond to a request for proposals put out by the same organization to hire a PR firm to help them improve their writing and messaging strategies. This proposal should demonstrate your knowledge of the organization's current practices and offer a detailed strategy for improvement. This should also include sample messages for all social media platforms, the website, and other prominent channels used by the organization. You may also suggest new platforms to use and include sample messages and strategies for this. This proposal should also be visually appealing and be easy to read for the prospective client. Remember that you want to sell your knowledge and your plan of action for the organization. More details about this assignment will be provided in class.

The strategic media content proposal is due on Thursday, December 8.

Final Presentation

For your final presentation, you will be pitching me as if I was in charge of hiring the outside PR firm to help my organization improve its messaging and writing on our current platforms, as well as any recommendations you have for new platforms. You will only have 5-7 minutes for the pitch, so you will want to make sure that it is focused, persuasive, and includes information from the research you conducted throughout your organizational audit and strategic media content proposal. This isn't an overview presentation of everything you've done. You are trying to make a persuasive argument to me based on your research about changes our organization should make or practices that we should continue. You will be graded on the soundness of your arguments, your ability to integrate both research you conducted as well as external research into your presentation, and general presentation delivery skills. You will also be deducted points for going over time.

Final presentations will occur in class on Thursday, December 8.

There are 1000 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class average will be calculated and fractions will be rounded to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below.

Grades:

<i>Reading Blog Posts (8)</i>	20 points each	160 points
<i>Cleaning Your Copy Quiz</i>		50 points
<i>Organizational Audit</i>		75 points
<i>Unit 3 Class Leading</i>		100 points
<i>Podcast</i>		75 points
<i>Twitter Chat</i>		50 points
<i>White Paper</i>		140 points
<i>Strategic Media Proposal</i>		150 points
<i>Portfolio</i>		50 points
<i>Final Presentation</i>		50 points
<i>Class Participation</i>		100 points
<i>Total</i>		1000 points

Your **final grade** in the course will be calculated as follows:

A = 900 to 1000 points

B = 800 to 899 points

C = 700 to 799 points

D = 600 to 699 points

F = 599 points or below

QUALITY OF WORK:

A large part of writing for strategic media is having a polished written concept of what you are communicating. Because this is a graduate-level writing course, all work in this course should follow AP Style, including proper spelling, grammar, and language. This includes all class work and presentations. Problems in these or other areas will result in point deductions.

I expect your work to be good and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources, you should use APA formatting (both internal and external). If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

I am always willing to help you. Always ask for clarification(s) if you have any questions or doubts: the sooner the better. Email typically is not the best way to connect with me to discuss course material. Email is good for when you have administrative questions, not for when you are having difficulty understanding the course material. Hence, I strongly recommend that you make use of office hours. I look forward to working with you! I am willing to read and discuss rough drafts of all work, but require a minimum of 24 hours for turnaround. This should be done via email, not eCourseware.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for non-attendance or habitual late arrival. You may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as death in the family that can be documented (e.g., doctor's note or copy of the newspaper obituary).

QUESTIONS ABOUT GRADES:

If you would like to ask about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time, as I will not discuss grades via email or during class. If you have a question or problem with a grade, exam question, or in-class assignment, you have 48 hours after the assignment is returned to you to contact me, or the grade stands. Your question or appeal must be stated in writing, citing your position and why you feel the mark is incorrect. The appeal should be turned in to the professor or sent via email within the stated time frame.

Additionally, you are responsible for tracking your grade online and meeting with me early in the semester if you are concerned about your overall grade. Meeting with me early and often can help both parties involved find ways to improve student-professor understanding and quality of work.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Please note that this schedule is tentative and subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Readings should be completed prior to the session they will be discussed. Articles and links are available on eCourseware.*

Unit I: Defining Strategic Media and the Role of Writing

1. August 25 Course Introduction

Bates, D. (2015, July 20). Writing skills are highest priority for new PR hires. *Institute for Public Relations*. Retrieved from <http://www.instituteforpr.org/writing-skills-highest-priority-new-pr-hires/>

Holland, K. (2013, November 11). Why Johnny can't write, and why employers are made. *NBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.nbcnews.com/business/why-johnny-cant-write-why-employers-are-mad-2d11577444>

2. September 1 Ethics of Writing for Strategic Media

Blog Post 1 due

Berger B. (2005). Power over, power with, and power to relations: Critical reflections on public relations, the dominant coalition and activism. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(1), 5-28.

Callison, C., Merle, P. F., & Seltzer, T. (2014). Smart friendly liars: Public perceptions of public relations practitioners over time. *Public Relations Review*, 40(5), 829-831.

Lospennato, E. (2016, July 19). What PR pros can learn from Melania Trump's infamous speech. *Version 2.0 Communications*. Retrieved from <http://www.v2comms.com/news-post/pr-pros-can-learn-melania-trumps-infamous-speech/>

Place, K. R. (2015). Exploring the role of ethics in public relations program evaluation. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 27(2), 118-135.

3. September 8 Writing for Traditional Media

Blog Post 2 due

Cleaning your copy: Grammar, style, and more. Retrieved from <http://www.newsu.org/courses/cleaning-your-copy-grammar-style-more> (due Sept. 22)

Lee, S. T., & Basnyat, I. (2013). From press release to news: Mapping the framing of the 2009 H1N1 A influenza pandemic. *Health Communication*, 28(2), 119-132.

Liu, B. F., & Kim, S. (2011). How organizations framed the 2009 H1N1 pandemic via social and traditional media: Implications for U.S. health communicators. *Public Relations Review*, 37(3), 233-244.

Wickman, C. (2014). Rhetorical framing in corporate press releases: The case of British Petroleum and the Gulf Oil spill. *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, 8(1), 3-20.

4. September 15 Writing for Social Media

Blog Post 3 due

Botha, E. (2014). A means to an end: Using political satire to go viral. *Public Relations Review*, 40(2), 363-374.

Hether, H. J. (2014). Dialogic communication in the health care context: A case study of Kaiser Permanente's social media practices. *Public Relations Review*, 40(5), 856-858.

Joki, K. (2015). 6 tips for writing well on social media. *Grammarly blog*. Retrieved from <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/six-tips-for-writing-well-on-social-media/>

Lovejoy, K., Walters, R. D., & Saxton, G. D. (2012). Engaging stakeholders through Twitter: How nonprofit organizations are getting more out of 140 characters or less. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 313-318.

Saxton, G. D., & Waters, R. D. (2014). What do stakeholders like on Facebook? Examining public reactions to nonprofit organizations' informational promotional, and community-building messages. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 26(3), 280-299.

Unit II: Finding Your Voice in Strategic Media

5. September 22 Advocacy, Activism and Strategic Media

***Cleaning Your Copy Quiz Due**

***Blog Post 4**

Auger, Giselle A. (2013). Fostering democracy through social media: Evaluating diametrically opposed nonprofit advocacy organizations' use of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. *Public Relations Review*, 39(4), 369-376.

Madden, S., Janoske, M. L., & Briones, R. (2015, May). *Who loves consent?: An analysis of responses to the culture jamming of Victoria's Secret*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Rasmussen, L. (2015). Planned Parenthood takes on Live Action: An analysis of media interplay and image restoration strategies in strategic conflict management. *Public Relations Review*, 41(3), 354-356.

Stokes, A. Q., & Rubin, D. (2010). Activism and the limits of symmetry: The public relations battle between Colorado GASP and Philip Morris. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(1), 26-48.

Torres, J. (2015, July 9). Race and the media: How a new generation of activists is challenging the narrative. *Free Press*. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/free-press/race-and-the-media-20a141c7fffc#ks3d3cfjk>

6. September 29 Organizational Voice

***Blog Post 5 due**

Content Rules – Chs. 1-9 (pp. xvii-119)

Sung, K-H., & Kim, S. (2014). I want to be your friend: The effects of organizations' interpersonal approaches on social networking sites. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 26(3), 235-255.

7. October 6 Finding Your Personal Voice

***Organizational Audit due**

***Blog Post 6 due**

Berger, B. (2015, May 28). Don't lose your voice: How to develop your personal style while writing for clients. *The Bradford Group*. Retrieved from <http://www.bradfordgroup.com/blog/dont-lose-your-voice-how-to-develop-your-personal-style-while-writing-for-clients/>

Berlatsky, N. (2014, November 29). 'Voice' isn't the point of writing. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/11/finding-your-voice-as-a-writer-overrated/382946/>

Rheingold, H. (2008). Using participatory media and public voice to encourage civic engagement. *Civic Life Online: Learning How Digital Media Can Engage Youth*. Edited by W. Lance Bennett. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Strayer, J. F. (2016, February 15). The five R's of creating a personal brand. *Institute for Public Relations*. Retrieved from <http://www.instituteforpr.org/the-five-rs-of-personal-brand/>

Toor, R. (2010, February 11). The habit of writing. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Habit-of-Writing/64001/>.

8. October 13 Creativity and Experimentation in Content Creation

***Blog Post 7 due**

Everybody Writes, p. 1-275

9. October 20 Including Diverse Voices

***Blog Post 8 due**

Austin, L. L. (2010). Framing diversity: A qualitative content analysis of public relations industry publications. *Public Relations Review*, 36(3), 298-301.

Curtin, P., & Gaither, T. K. (2005). Privileging identity, difference, and power: The circuit of culture as a basis for public relations theory. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(2), 91-115.

Mundy, D. E. (2015). Diversity 2.0: How the public relations function can take the lead in a new generation of diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives. *Research Journal of the Institute of Public Relations*, 2(2), 1-35.

Toth, E. (2009, April 9). Diversity and public relations practice. *Institute for Public Relations*. Retrieved from <http://www.instituteforpr.org/diversity-and-pr-practice/>

Vardeman-Winter, J. (2011). Confronting whiteness in public relations campaigns and research with women. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 23(4), 412-441.

Unit III: Writing for Strategic Media in Action

10. October 27 Writing for Audio/Visual

Readings TBD

11. November 3 Writing with Authority: White Papers, Position Papers, and Research Reports

Readings TBD

12. November 10 Writing Persuasively: Grant & Proposal Writing

Readings TBD

13. November 17 Writing in a Crisis

***Podcast due**

Readings TBD

14. November 24 No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Have a great break!

15. December 1 The Art of Editing

***White paper due**

Readings TBD

15. December 8 Final Presentations

***Proposal Due**

***Twitter Chat Due**

***Portfolio Due**

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

"Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part

of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all." (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

DEADLINES:

Remember there's a reason "DEAD" makes up half the word "deadline." All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don't know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

DIVERSITY:

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

WEATHER POLICY:

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.