

Emory & Henry College • Mass Communications Program

Strengths

- Students are prepared for careers in a converged media industry.
- Students have a better variety of first-job opportunities from which to choose.
- Students are forced to try a variety of things—and often discover other gifts and interests along the way.
- Students work in a collaborative environment, utilizing each others' various strengths and expertise in a way that replicates real-world work situations.
- Students entering public relations have solid news background and skills to produce and/or hire out various media products.
- The liberal arts focus grounds students in historical, economic, management, ethical, legal, political, and cultural issues inherent to fulfilling mass media careers.
- A strong focus on internships and campus media experiences produces graduates with impressive resumes and skills sets.

Challenges

- The small number of courses (10 three-hour classes for a major) does not allow much room to teach everything.
- Some courses don't go into the depth that would serve students well.
- Converged and consolidated courses do not lend themselves easily to traditional textbooks, requiring intensive and creative course development.
- With only three faculty members (and a dearth of those qualified to teach adjunct in our rural area), faculty members must develop expertise in many fields. Ongoing training is required, for which there is little time and money.

Current Strategies

- Require two half-credit courses in Campus Media Workshop.
- Integrate Web throughout all skills courses as applicable, rather than in a designated course. (Underscores the pervasiveness of Web).
- Seek additional training for all faculty in Web skills, as we have been unsuccessful in retaining faculty with new media expertise.
- Continue developing course names and descriptions that are broad enough to provide flexibility as industry shifts and technological advancements dictate.

Dilemmas for the Future

- Mass Media & Society course: As with others schools, we are struggling with what to keep and what to lose in this class as the content continually increases—and as technology and business change faster than the textbooks. Additionally, our course is a social science elective in our general education program, so how do you teach the course for all students and lay a foundation for majors?
- How much Web do we teach? Is Web technology too advanced to teach in a condensed core in a small program? How do we integrate such a course(s)? Where do we find someone to teach this?
- How much should we focus on new application skills (Twitter, Facebook, etc.), while emphasizing concepts and fundamentals that will last far beyond the latest technology? How do we prepare our students for the job market with necessary skills and still keep the focus on everlasting ideals?