

COMM 1130-070 Media Writing | 3 Credits

Instructor: Dominic Walker-Pecoraro

Classroom: Zoom & Canvas

Modality: IVC Hybrid with Online Monday-Sunday Modules

Class Time: Wednesday 6pm-7pm

Office Location: Remote

Office Hours: Mondays & Thursdays 10am-11am

Email: D.Walker-Pecoraro@Honors.Utah.Edu

CANVAS & ZOOM:

This course utilizes Canvas and Zoom online services. You may communicate with me via Canvas or Umail. You must have reliable internet connection and log in to our Canvas course regularly and attend weekly Zoom meetings to do well in this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students will learn the basics of writing for the media in preparation for further study in public relations, marketing, and business/technical writing. Students will learn how to process complex information, verify it and write about it clearly and concisely for digital and print formats. The course also includes basic editing and consideration of legal and ethical questions as well as newsworthiness and news value.

APPROACH:

This course has a synchronous and remote weekly meeting via Zoom on Wednesdays from 6pm to 7pm. There will also be an asynchronous component of the course via Canvas, in which students will complete Canvas modules labeled as "Canvas Coursework." All assessment for this course will be graded via Canvas.

TEXTBOOK/REQUIRED READINGS/AUDIO/VISUAL:

Kuehn, S. A., & Lingwall, A. (2016). *The Basics of Media Writing: A Strategic Approach*. CQ Press.

Various podcasts, audio/visual and other written material will also be assigned/required to supplement what we are covering.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to introduce you to strategic writing, and how to adapt it for multiple platforms. In this course, you will learn guidelines, formats and styles for media writing. You will also be prompted to think critically about the various types of strategic communication and their role in society.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- * Write clearly and concisely for a variety of strategic communication situations.
- * Understand the basic principles underlying the news writing and strategic communication industries.
- * Have a portfolio of completed course assignments that is suitable to send to potential employers.

Course Policies

Class attendance & Make-Up Work:

Because class attendance and course grade are demonstrably and positively related, the University expects students to actively contribute and participate in courses in which they are enrolled. Your virtual attendance and participation are important to advancing the growth of the culture of the class as well as your own personal communication skills. Although this course exists online, you should still be engaged with the course material and your classmates. Failure to regularly participate in the weekly lectures, course assignments and Canvas modules will negatively affect your grade.

If you miss assignments due to an extraordinary circumstance or emergency, please contact me ASAP to arrange making up assignments. I will only consider allowing make-up assignments in a documented circumstance, and you must furnish this documentation within 7 days of your missed assignments.

Work Submitted to Canvas:

Please note that work should be submitted to Canvas by the deadline announced on Canvas and/or listed in the syllabus. Work submitted to Canvas must be submitted before the deadline in a Word doc(x) or pdf format

unless otherwise announced or noted. Do not submit Google doc links, notes or pages documents. If an assignment is not submitted by the deadline in the appropriate format, it is subject to late work penalties up to you forfeiting any and all credit for the assignment. Assignments **should** be formatted in AP style. **Once an assignment is graded in Canvas, you may not resubmit the assignment. The originally assigned grade will stand.**

Late Work & Extensions:

I do **not** accept late work (see next paragraph for caveats). Adhering to deadlines through proper time management is an important skill that is positively correlated with professional and academic success. Assignments are to be submitted via Canvas by 11:59pm (unless otherwise specified) on the assigned due date. Assignments submitted after the due date and time will not be accepted or graded.

I understand that life events occur throughout the semester, so I will allow **three** penalty-free 24-hour extension on a written assignment. You do not need to let me know *why* you are using an extension, but you need to tell me (via email) **before** the deadline for the assignment that you are using the extension. Otherwise, your assignment will still be marked late. These extensions do not apply to any extra credit assignments. You can use an extension for any assignment in a portfolio, but **not** the whole portfolio submission. These extensions do **not** apply to any exams or quizzes in the course.

Extra Credit:

I will infrequently provide the opportunity for extra credit throughout the course. You should take advantage of any and all extra credit opportunities made available. I do not and will not make individual forms of extra credit available.

Grade Question and Concerns:

If you have any questions about posted grades, you are able to discuss them with me between 24 hours and 10 days of the time that the grade post-date in Canvas. I will discuss grades with you during office hours or by appointment, so I will not answer questions via email or in the classroom. Grades will not be changed after 10 days unless there is a system or clerical error.

Course Policy on Academic Integrity/(Dis)Honesty:

Given the nature of a media writing course, it's particularly important for students to understand what constitutes **plagiarism**. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional representation of another person's ideas or words as your own. It is plagiarism to:

- Turn in any portion of someone else's work as your own
- Use any portion of a "file" from a previous assignment and submit it as your original work
- Take passages from someone's work (published or unpublished) and include it in an assignment without citing the original author and using quotation marks
- Copy (word-for-word, or with some words changed or rearranged) another person's work without using quotation marks and appropriate citation
- Knowingly allow another student to use your work as their own
- Work with another media writing student to essentially create one assignment, with each student submitting a version of it in his/her own class
- Use **your own work (self-plagiarism)** from a different class (i.e. a paper you wrote for an English course), a different section, or different assignment and submit it as original work for this section of COMM 1130.
- Use all or part of other work you have previously written. Consult your instructor if you have questions about how to properly approach a topic/assignment for this course that you've done before.

This list is not an exhaustive, but it hopefully gives you some concrete examples of what plagiarism means. All students are required to upload their major written assignments (including outlines and papers) electronically to Canvas, where it will be run through text matching software. Failure to do so may result in a substantially reduced grade on the assignment or failure for the course. All material submitted for evaluation must be the original work of the student and be produced in the current semester. It is a form of academic misconduct to

submit all or part of any assignment written for another course, a previous semester of COMM 1130, or competition for a grade in COMM 1130 without your instructor's knowledge and permission, which includes all work produced as a high school student or used in high school competition.

If you are in doubt about whether an activity violates the academic integrity policy, it is your responsibility to ask your instructor ahead of time.

Netiquette Requirements:

You should adhere to the following e-mail guidelines. **You must email me from your university Umail or Canvas account. I cannot discuss the course and your grades with external emails addresses (Gmail, Yahoo, etc.).** If your e-mail does not adhere to these guidelines, I will send a reply asking you to review the guidelines and will not provide a respond to your question or concern until the guidelines are followed.

- The e-mail subject line should include COMM 1130-070 and refer to what you will be discussing.
- The e-mail must include a salutation. "Dominic" is an appropriate salutation for this class.
- You will need to use correct grammar/spelling/capitalization in your e-mails.
- All e-mails need to be signed

I will reply to emails sent Monday-Thursday in 24 hours, and within 48 hours for emails sent Friday-Sunday.

Teaching & Learning Philosophy:

I believe that everyone comes to a class with their own personal experiences and opinions – no one is a blank slate. That being said, I encourage you to tap into your own experiences to stimulate and inspire your composition and participation in the course. Please be mindful of other individuals' identities and beliefs. Communication that harmfully threatens another physically, socially, mentally or emotionally will not be tolerated. I value open communication, and I will clearly state my expectations while discussing guidelines for assignments and class engagement. I practice this philosophy not to be rigid or make the course seem difficult. Rather, I want you to know the expectations in order for you to succeed and achieve in the course.

Note about Rigor:

An introductory 1000-level course does **not** communicate that the course is inherently easier or less work than an upper level course. Rather, it signifies that the course will provide a platform for teaching and learning of foundational knowledge that will be used in all future courses in the sequence/emphasis. This course is three credit hours, so the amount of time expected to be invested in this course is identical to any standard three credit hour courses one would take in a university setting.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Canvas Coursework:

Weekly modules will open on Mondays and close on Sundays at 11:59pm. Make sure to note that some modules are two weeks and others are one week. These modules may include discussion boards, practice writing assignments and AP style activities.

Media Writing Examples:

Media writing examples will be due to Canvas on **Sundays @ 11:59pm** on the close date of each module in which they are assignments. For these assignments, you will find an example of media writing (news article, social media post, website, podcast or other mediated composition) and summarize, critique, analyze and evaluate it. Your write-up should be 1.5 to 2 pages double-spaced and include a link to the example.

Midterm Portfolio (Due 3/14 @ 11:59pm):

- (1) Perspective Podcast: 300-500 word script and recorded audio. Introducing, reflecting and concluding on a personal event to show your perspective.
- (2) News Story (400-800 words): Hard News or Feature Writing piece. Covers a topic of concern in your community and includes at least 3 testimonials.

(3) Long-Form Web-Copy Story (500-1,000 words): List-based story that covers a topic of interest.

Final Portfolio (Due 5/2 @ 11:59pm) – Pick 3:

- (1) LinkedIn Profile: Create a professional LinkedIn profile highlighting your experience and expertise. You would want to appeal to potential employers and professional connections. Highlights your personal brand.
- (2) Persuasive Piece (800-1,200 words): Op-ed. Take a position and concisely and succinctly argue it.
- (3) Press Release (1 page max): Corporate release to the public regarding an event specific to your chosen company.
- (4) TV Ad (30-60 audio/visual script): Advertisement specific to your chosen company. Created as a storyboard.
- (5) Social Media Campaign (1 Tweet, 1 Instagram post, 1 Facebook post, 1 LinkedIn Post and 1 Tik Tok): Content will be about same event/topic but will vary based on platform. Clear overview of objectives provided. Related to your chosen company and event.

Exams:

A midterm exam and comprehensive final exam will be given online. Prepare to do more than memorize facts – you will also be asked to apply what you’ve learned, make judgments, critically evaluate ideas, draw conclusions, engage in self-reflection and create content. Exams will be administered via Canvas. If you experience any technical difficulties, you must let me know ASAP; otherwise, I may not reset your exam. Exams will not be given early or after the due date.

GRADES

Final grades are based on a point system. Grades are rounded to the nearest tenth. For example, an 89.92% is a B+ and an 89.97% is an A-. Plus/minus grades will be assigned using the following scale:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
93-100%	90-92.9%	87-89.9%	83-86.9%	80-82.9%	77-79.9%	73-76.9%	70-72.9%	67-69.9%	63-66.9%	60-62.9%	Below 60%

Assignments:

Canvas Coursework	340 points
Media Writing Examples (7 x 30pts each)	210 points
Midterm Portfolio (3 parts x 100pts each)	300 points
Final Portfolio (3 parts x 100pts each)	300 points
Midterm Exam	150 points
Final Exam	200 points

Total Points **1500 points**

University and Departmental Policies

The Americans with Disabilities Act:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable *prior notice* needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services (CDS), 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

If you will require additional assistance with any course activities due to disability, please let the instructor know *as soon as possible*. You may find the Center for Disability Services online at <http://disability.utah.edu>.

University Safety Statement:

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety

messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu. SANDY POLICE: 801-799-3000

Addressing Sexual Misconduct:

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 585-2677(COPS).

Inclusivity Statement:

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

Undocumented Student Support Statement:

Immigration is a complex phenomenon with broad impact—those who are directly affected by it, as well as those who are indirectly affected by their relationships with family members, friends and loved ones. If your immigration status presents obstacles to engaging in specific activities or fulfilling specific course criteria, confidential arrangements may be requested from the Dream Center. Arrangements with the Dream Center will not jeopardize your student status, your financial aid or any other part of your residence. The Dream Center offers a wide range of resources to support undocumented students (with and without DACA) as well as students from mixed-status families. To learn more, please contact the Dream Center at 801-213-3697 or visit <https://dream.utah.edu>

Name/Pronouns:

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name as well as "Preferred first name" (if previously entered by you in the Student Profile section of your CIS account, which managed can be managed at any time). While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, I will call you by the name and pronoun(s) that feels best for you in class or on assignments. Please advise me of any name or pronoun changes so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun are respected. If you need any assistance or support, please reach out to the LGBT Resource Center.

https://lgbt.utah.edu/campus/faculty_resources.php

Wellness Statement:

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

Veterans Center:

If you are a student veteran, the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center located in Room 161 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: <http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/>. Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.

English Language Learners: If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language and writing development. These resources include: The Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu/>), the Writing Program (<http://writingprogram.utah.edu/>), and the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli/>). Please let me know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

Drop/Withdrawal Policy:

You can drop a course during the first ten calendar days of the semester. You may withdraw (with a “W” recorded on the student’s academic record) until the midpoint of the semester, as indicated on the academic calendar. After that, withdrawal is possible only “in cases of compelling non-academic emergencies” through petition of the dean of your college. Enrolling in, dropping, and withdrawing from courses is the student’s responsibility. Please see the [Student Handbook](#).

Academic (Dis)Honesty:

The [Student Code](#) spells out specific rights of students in the classroom. The *Student Code* also specifies proscribed conduct, including cheating on exams, collusion, and plagiarism. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty can receive an “E” for the assignment or the course, and other disciplinary action may be taken. Please see the course policy on plagiarism/academic (dis)honesty.

Curriculum Accommodations:

Curriculum accommodations take two forms: schedule accommodations and content accommodations.

The instructor can provide schedule accommodations for those who have a conflict that involves religious/spiritual observances, documented and University-sanctioned activities (including athletic participation demonstrated at the beginning of the semester), governmental obligations and family or medical-related emergencies. If you anticipate any scheduling conflict with this course, please speak with the instructor as soon as possible. In every case, it is the student’s responsibility to arrange alternatives as soon as possible for any assignment, presentation or examination.

Content accommodations will not be provided for this course. All assignments, activities and content are selected to achieve specific pedagogical outcomes.

Learning Environment:

We will maintain our classroom as a productive place to learn. We are all responsible for fostering an environment open to observing, discussing and reflecting upon our own and others’ communicative behaviors in order to learn. Thus, each one of us will need to be conscious of our role in providing a place where every class member, given all our differences, will feel and function as part of the class. If at any time or for any reason you feel uncomfortable with the classroom environment, please contact the instructor immediately in order to resolve/improve the situation.

Course Schedule	
Any changes will be announced in class and/or posted to Canvas.	
Weeks/Dates/Topics	Readings/Focus
Week#1: Course Introduction/Overview 1/19-1/24	Overview: Canvas Coursework & Media Writing Examples
Week #2: Media Writing Foundations 1/25-1/31	Ch. 1: Foundations Ch. 2: Professions & Strategies Additional Lecture: Media Literacy
Week #3: Style & Invention 2/1-2/7	Ch. 3: Style & Language Conventions Additional PDF Reading: Narrative as Invention Listen: Serial S3E1 Overview: Perspective Podcast
Week #4: Reporting 2/8-2/14	Ch. 4: Reporting & Interviewing Ch. 5: Hard News & Feature Writing Overview: News Story
Week #5: Electronic Media Writing 2/15-2/21	Ch. 6: Electronic News Writing Ch. 10: Web Copy-Writing Overview: Long-Form Web Copy
Week #6: Drafting (for Midterm Portfolio) & Editing 2/22-2/28	Ch. 7: Copyediting Draft Midterm Portfolio Pieces Individual Meetings Strongly Encouraged
Weeks #7-8: Midterm Exam & Midterm Portfolio 3/1-3/14 Circuit Breaker: No Course Meetings	Submit Midterm Portfolio Complete Midterm Exam Individual Meetings Strongly Encouraged
Week #9: "Bye" Week 3/15-2/21	No Course Meeting
Week #10: Ethics & Persuasion 3/22-3/28	Ch. 8: Media Law & Ethics Ch. 11: Basic Persuasive Writing Overview: LinkedIn Profile Overview: Persuasive Piece
Week #11: Brand & Business Communications 1 3/29-4/4	Ch. 9: Writing for Social Media Ch. 12: Public Relations
Week #12: Brand & Business Communications 2 4/5-4/11	Ch. 13: Advertising Ch. 14: Business Communications Overview: TV/Digital Ad Overview: Press Release Overview: Social Media Campaign
Week #13: Drafting (for Final Portfolio) 4/12-4/18	Current Topics in Media Writing Draft Final Portfolio Pieces Individual Meetings Strongly Encouraged
Weeks #14-15: Final Exam & Final Portfolio 4/19-5/2 No Course Meetings	Submit Final Portfolio Complete Final Exam Individual Meetings Strongly Encouraged