

Course Syllabus

COMM 107 Foundations of Media Writing
Fall Semester 2017

Professor Mark Tolstedt

Comm Arts Center #228

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Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday: 10-11AM

W/F: by appointment

Course Description:

Introduction to fundamental writing knowledge and skills necessary for media writing.

The goal for this class is to give students exposure to fundamental writing knowledge and the skills enabling them to successfully learn and produce more specific writing in advanced classes.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this class;

- 1) Students will be able to identify and employ the basic elements of successful writing, including composition appropriate to purpose, topic and audience.
- 2) Students will demonstrate the ability to compose articulate, grammatically correct, organized scripts in film, AV, and audio formats and use appropriate style manuals for digital and print media.
- 3) Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in a writing process that requires continuing development, rereading, revision and the ability to critique their own and the work of others.
- 4) Students will demonstrate the ability to find, organize, evaluate, and use research material gathered from multiple sources including scholarly databases and informal electronic networks for fiction and nonfiction writing.

Required Textbooks:

Stovall, J. G. (2015). *Writing for the Mass Media, 9th ed.* Boston: Pearson.

Note: book is on Textbook Rental

AP Style Book

Note: this is available to you free of charge through Electronic Reserve. You can access eReserve through the library home page or through D2L.

Course Requirements and Grading:

The Aesop Exercise:

Students will choose a particular fable of Aesop's (a great source for an alphabetized list of fables can be found at www.pacificnet.net/~johnr/aesop/.) Some examples of the fables include: "The Hare and the Tortoise," "The Ant and the Grasshopper," "The Goose with the Golden Eggs," "4 Oxen and the Lion," and "The Milkmaid and Her Pail." After choosing a fable, students will demonstrate their ability to implement the inverted pyramid components into a breaking article. The fable will be adapted, including lead sentences, transition statements, AP style, wordiness, and second paragraphs. This assignment is worth 25 points and due in the DropBox by 11PM on the assigned date. A more complete assignment guide is available in the content area of D2L.

Nursery Rhyme Exercise:

After choosing a nursery rhyme, students will create a news article by adapting the rhyme. The students will answer all six of "The Steps of Gathering a News Story" (who, when, what, where, why, how) when composing the article. Students must also apply at least one component of "news values" into the article (impact, timeliness, prominence, proximity, conflict, bizarre, or currency). This assignment is worth 25 points and due in the DropBox by 11PM on the assigned date. A more complete assignment guide is available in the content area of D2L.

Media Writing Book Report Assignment:

There are several books about media writing in the UWSP library (and other libraries available to you). You are to find one of them and prepare a book report of NO MORE THAN three double-spaced pages (10 or 12-point type). The report should summarize the book's major arguments or if a biography, give "flashpoints" of a media writer's career. Additionally, you should provide your own critique of the book. Then, locate a printed or published book review of your selected book (there are several online book review indices and journals that regularly review media books). Among those journals are *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, and *Journal of Media Education*. These journals are available through various databases on the library website. Use the book review to see what others have said about your book, then compare that to what you found. Submit both to the DropBox. This assignment is worth 25 points and due in the DropBox by 11PM on the date assigned. A more complete assignment guide is available in the content area of D2L.

Group Script Formats Assignment:

Over a three-week period, students working in small groups, will create a story based on the theme: Boy meets Girl.

Each group will: 1) Identify an audience for their story; write a 2-3 paragraph description of the target audience; 2) write a 2-5 paragraph "backstory"; 3) write a 2-3 paragraph "character background" to each character in the story; 4) create a "plot diagram" for their story; 5) prepare a "treatment" (narrative exposition of what the

audience will see); 6) write a script in AV two-column format of their story; 7) write a film-style script of their story; and 8) write an audio script of their story. This assignment is worth 50 points and due in the DropBox by 11PM on the date assigned. A more complete assignment guide is available in the content area of D2L.

Friday Content Quizzes:

On five (5) Fridays during the semester, the class will take quizzes on content presented to that date in lecture AND the required readings in the book. Each is worth 20 points.

Friday In-Class Exercises:

On five (5) Fridays during the semester, the class will engage in an activity resulting in a written document of some type. Each is worth 10 points.

Point Totals and Grading Scale

Point Totals and Grading Scale:

The Aesop Exercise:		25
Nursery Rhyme Exercise:		25
Media Writing Book Report Assignment:		25
Group Script Formats Assignment:		50
Friday Content Quizzes:	5 @ 20	100
Friday In-Class Exercises:	5 @ 10	50
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:		275

91%+	=	A	250-275
90%	=	A-	248-259
89%	=	B+	245-247
81%-88%	=	B	223-244
80%	=	B-	220-222
79%	=	C+	217-219
71%-78%	=	C	195-216
70%	=	C-	192-194
69%	=	D+	190-191
61%-68%	=	D	168-189
0%-60%	=	F	0-167

Other Relevant Information:

I will be using email to contact you individually as needed. I will be posting updates and other information to the news item area of the D2L site for this class on a regular basis. It is expected that you monitor D2L for this class on a regular, if not daily, basis.

Dates due are deadlines:

-I will allow you to reschedule the date and time ONLY for reasons related to a death in the family, a conflict with another university activity, or a significant illness. In all cases, you must inform me in a timely fashion, in advance of the scheduled work. Please note: I may very well refuse to allow you to reschedule the date and/or time.

-Please refer to the schedule in the course syllabus AND to the calendar in D2L for due dates and times.

Attendance is Required: I will take attendance every class session. For every two unexcused (2) classes that you miss, your final grade will be reduced by a full letter.

Academic dishonesty: Using material from another source (book, journal, internet site, a faculty member, another student, etc.) without proper acknowledgment is not acceptable. Period. The University has policies that govern academic dishonesty. You should be familiar with them. You will find a statement of my views on plagiarism appended to this course syllabus. If you violate these policies on any of your course work, you will receive a grade of **Fail** for that assignment/exam. You may also receive a grade of **Fail** for the class and be subject to University procedures on academic dishonesty. YOUR WORK HAS TO BE YOUR OWN.

Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities:

UW-Stevens Point values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to success, we have developed a set of expectations for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the *Rights and Responsibilities* document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. Read more here: [http://](http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx)

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Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) is taken very seriously. Don't do it! The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. For more information, see the UWSP "Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures" section of the *Rights and Responsibilities* document, Chapter 14, which can be accessed here:

[http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/](http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf)
[Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf](http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf)

Assistive Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

For more information about UWSP's policies, check here:

[http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/](http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf)
[rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf](http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf)

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>

FERPA Disclaimer

This course requires posting of work online, that is viewable only by your classmates. None of the work submitted online will be shared publicly. Your academic records (grades, student IDs, personal identification information) will not be shared by the instructor of this course. Confidentiality of student work is imperative, so you should not share the work of your peers publicly without their permission. By participating in these assignments you are giving consent to sharing of your work with others in this class and you recognize there is a small risk of your work being shared online beyond the purposes of this course. If you elect to not participate in these online assignments due to confidentiality concerns, then an alternate assignment will be offered to you.

Netiquette:

Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Your instructor and fellow students wish to foster a safe online learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but you are not to attack an individual. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course community.

--The following netiquette tips will enhance the learning experience for everyone in the course:

- Do not dominate any discussion.
- Give other students the opportunity to join in the discussion.
Do not use offensive language. Present ideas appropriately.
- Be cautious in using Internet language. For example, do not capitalize all letters since this suggests shouting.
- Popular emoticons such as ☺ or / can be helpful to convey your tone but do not overdo or overuse them.
- Avoid using vernacular and/or slang language. This could possibly lead to misinterpretation.
- Never make fun of someone’s ability to read or write.
- Share tips with other students.
- Keep an “open-mind” and be willing to express even your minority opinion. Minority opinions have to be respected.
- Think and edit before you push the “Send” button.
- Do not hesitate to ask for feedback.
- Using humor is acceptable

Course Schedule:

Note: I reserve the right to make changes to the course requirements depending on need. If this happens, you will be notified of any changes in class, via D2L, and through email.

<u>Week 1:</u>		<u>Unit 1: Prewriting</u>	
Tuesday, September 5 th :	Course Introduction		
Thursday, September 7 th :	Prewriting		Stovall, Ch. 1
Friday, September 8 th :	Audience and Research		
<u>Week 2:</u>			
Tuesday, September 12 th :	Mechanics of Writing and Words		Stovall Chs. 2 + 3
Thursday, September 15 th :	Common Word Problems		Stovall Ch. 4
Friday, September 15 th :	CONTENT QUIZ #1		
<u>Week 3:</u>		<u>Unit 2: Style Manuals</u>	
Tuesday, September 19 th :	Style Manual APA		
Thursday, September 21 st :	Style Manual MLA		
Friday, September 22 nd :	IN-CLASS EXERCISE #1		
<u>Week 4:</u>			
Tuesday, September 26 th :	Style Manual AP		
Thursday, September 28 th :	NO CLASS		
	Media Writing Book Assignment Due by 11PM in DropBox		
Friday, September 29 th :	NO CLASS		
<u>Week 5:</u>		<u>Unit 3: Journalism</u>	
Tuesday, October 3 rd :	Journalism: Introductory Thoughts		Stovall, Ch. 5
Thursday, October 5 th :	Basic News Writing		Stovall, Ch. 6
Friday, October 6 th :	CONTENT QUIZ #2		
<u>Week 6:</u>			
Tuesday, October 10 th :	Conciseness		Stovall, Ch. 7
	Aesop assignment due in DropBox by 11PM		
Thursday, October 12 th :	Leads and Angles		Stovall, Ch. 8
Friday, October 13 th :	IN-CLASS EXERCISE #2		
<u>Week 7:</u>			
Tuesday, October 17 th :	Leads: a Review		
Thursday, October 19 th :	Print v. Broadcast		
Friday, October 20 th :	CONTENT QUIZ #3		
<u>Week 8:</u>			
Tuesday, October 24 th :	Journalism for the Internet		Stovall, Ch. 9
Thursday, October 26 th :	Writing Memes		
	Nursery Rhyme assignment due by 11PM in DropBox		
Friday, October 27 th :	IN-CLASS EXERCISE #3		
<u>Week 9:</u>		<u>Unit 4: Scripting</u>	
Tuesday, October 31 st :	Assignment		
Thursday, November 2 nd :	Structure and Plot		

Friday, November 3rd:

Formatting

IN-CLASS EXERCISE #4

Week 10:

Tuesday, November 7th:

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Thursday, November 9th:

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Friday, November 10th:

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

CONTENT QUIZ #4

Week 11:

Tuesday, November 14th:

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Thursday, November 16th:

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Friday, November 17th:

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Week 12:

Tuesday, November 21st:

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Thursday, November 23rd:

THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS

Friday, November 24th:

THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS

Week 13:

Tuesday, November 28th:

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Thursday, November 30th:

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Friday, December 1st:

All parts of group script assignment due in DropBox by 11PM

Week 14: Unit 5: Continuity Writing

Tuesday, December 5th:

Storyboarding

Stovall, Ch. 10

Thursday, December 7th:

Advertising and Concepting

Friday, December 8th:

CONTENT QUIZ #5

Week 15:

Tuesday, December 12th:

Public Relations

Stovall, Ch. 11

Thursday, December 14th:

Tag Lines

Friday, December 15th:

IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #5

Final Exam Time:

Note: There is no “final exam” for this class. During the scheduled final exam time, I will be in my office, available to discuss your point totals, etc.

Plagiarism

A major problem facing both professors and students is the practice of plagiarism, which is defined as "the deliberate or accidental use of ideas, research, or words of another person without fully attributing them to their original sources." As a student in this course, it is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism. A student who plagiarizes work in my class will receive a failing grade for that assignment, possibly for the course and may be subject to additional academic misconduct sanctions.

The following paragraph offers advice on paraphrasing, a major aspect of plagiarism: Clearly attribute ideas that you have paraphrased to their authors, both directly in your text and by providing reference citations. Do not try to paraphrase by changing just a few of the author's words (that's plagiarizing): **paraphrasing** involves substantial change in the order of words and ideas, usually to condense them. **Paraphrasing**, in other words, involves putting someone else's thoughts into your own words, not just rearranging the words and ideas or combining, but shortening, someone else's sentences. To avoid unintentionally writing a plagiaristic paraphrase, carefully mark the notes that you take on your references where you use exact or nearly exact, words of the source.

The following guidelines are offered as additional hints on what plagiarism is:

--Every paper or report submitted for credit is accepted as the student's own work. It may not, therefore, have been composed, wholly or partially, by another person.

--The wording of a student's paper is taken as his or her own. Thus he or she may not submit work that has been copied, wholly or partially, from a book, article, essay, newspaper or another student's paper or notebook, or any other written or printed source (including speeches, WWW sites, news reports, etc.). Direct quotes or ideas from outside sources may be used, but they must be properly cited. Thus, do not simply change a few words within a sentence from a source, put it in your paper, and drop a footnote by it without using quotation marks. Doing so represents the sentence as your own, when it is not, and this is plagiarism!

--As a student, you may incorporate in your paper ideas that have arisen from discussion or lectures when you incorporated these ideas into your own thinking. However, be careful to either cite properly the source of the ideas or cite other sources that reinforce the ideas you are using.

--You may, as a part of the good writing process, give your work to someone else for suggestions. However, having someone else totally correct and revise your work constitutes that person's work, not your own, and thus constitutes plagiarism.

--You may of course submit a paper to be typed by another person, provided that typist has not sought to change the wording, ideas, organization, or any significant aspect of the paper in any way. If you submit such a paper, be sure to proofread carefully.

--No paper may be submitted for credit that has been or is being used to fulfill the requirements of another course, in whatever department, unless permission to coordinate work has been granted by both professors.

--Students in my courses are expected to utilize the APA stylebook, which provides guidelines for proper citation.

Did I Plagiarize?

The Types and Severity of Plagiarism Violations

