

## Course Syllabus

COMM 107 Foundations of Media Writing  
Fall Semester 2019

### Professor Mark Tolstedt

Comm Arts Center #228

346-3920

mtolsted@uwsp.edu

Office Hours:

Tuesdays & Thursdays:

10-11AM

M/W:

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 media 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, 9<sup>th</sup> 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 CANVAS.

### 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](http://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 is due in the CANVAS DropBox by 11PM on the date assigned (see course schedule below). A more complete assignment guide is available in the content area of CANVAS.

#### *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. The assignment is due in the CANVAS DropBox by 11PM on the date assigned (see course schedule below). A more complete assignment guide is available in the content area of CANVAS.

#### *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 books major arguments or if a biography, give “flashpoints” of a media writers 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 point and is due in the CANVAS DropBox by 11PM on the date assigned (see course schedule below) A more complete assignment guide is available in the content area of CANVAS.

#### *Group Script Formats Assignment:*

Over a three-week period, students working in assigned groups, will create a story based on a theme assigned in class. 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 and is

due in the CANVAS DropBox by 11PM on the date assigned (see course schedule below). A more complete assignment guide is available in the content area of CANVAS.

*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:

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
<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:</b>		<b>275</b>

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 CANVAS site for this class on a regular basis. It is expected that you monitor CANVAS for this class on a regular, if not daily, basis.

I do not use class time to return and go over exams/quizzes. If you ever want to review an individual exam/quiz, you are welcome to meet with me.

*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 CANVAS for due dates and times. If I ask for a revision to your work or I grant you a deadline extension, you have 1 week from the original due date to submit the work.**

*Attendance is Required:* I will take attendance every class session. **For every two (2) unexcused 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 succeed, 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://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx>

*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/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/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 Albertson Hall (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 CANVAS, and through email.

<u>Week 1:</u>	<u>Unit 1:</u>	<u>Prewriting</u>	
	Tuesday, September 3 <sup>rd</sup> :	Course Introduction	
	Thursday, September 5 <sup>th</sup> :	Prewriting	Stovall Chapter 1
	Friday, September 6 <sup>th</sup> :	Audience and Research	
<u>Week 2:</u>			
	Tuesday, September 10 <sup>th</sup> :	Mechanics of Writing/Words	Stovall Chapters 2+3
	Thursday, September 12 <sup>th</sup> :	Common Word Problems	Stovall Chapter 4
	Friday, September 13 <sup>th</sup> :	CONTENT QUIZ #1	
<u>Week 3:</u>	<u>Unit 2:</u>	<u>Style Manuals</u>	
	Tuesday, September 17 <sup>th</sup> :	Style Manuals & the APA	
	Thursday, September 19 <sup>th</sup> :	Style Manual MLA	
	Friday, September 20 <sup>th</sup> :	IN-CLASS EXERCISE #1	
<u>Week 4:</u>			
	Tuesday, September 24 <sup>th</sup> :	Style Manual Associated Press	
	Thursday, September 26 <sup>th</sup> :	NO CLASS	
			Media Writing Book Assignment Due by 11PM
	Friday, September 27:	NO CLASS	
<u>Week 5:</u>	<u>Unit 3:</u>	<u>Journalism:</u>	
	Tuesday, October 1 <sup>st</sup> :	Journalism: Intro	Stovall, Chapter 5
	Thursday, October 3 <sup>rd</sup> :	Basic News Writing	Stovall, Chapter 6
	Friday, October 4 <sup>th</sup> :	CONTENT QUIZ #2	
<u>Week 6:</u>			
	Tuesday, October 8 <sup>th</sup> :	Conciseness	Stovall, Ch. 7
			Aesop assignment due in DropBox by 11PM
	Thursday, October 10 <sup>th</sup> :	Leads and Angles	Stovall, Chapters 8
	Friday, October 11 <sup>th</sup> :	IN-CLASS EXERCISE #2	
<u>Week 7:</u>			
	Tuesday, October 15 <sup>th</sup> :	Print v. Broadcast	
	Thursday, October 17 <sup>th</sup> :	Print v. Broadcast (part 2)	
	Friday, October 18 <sup>h</sup> :	CONTENT QUIZ #3	
<u>Week 8:</u>			
	Tuesday, October 22 <sup>nd</sup> :	Internet & Online Journalism	Stovall, Ch. 9
	Thursday, October 24 <sup>th</sup> :	Writing Memes	
	Friday, October 25 <sup>th</sup> :	IN-CLASS EXERCISE #3	
			Nursery Rhyme assignment due by 11PM
<u>Week 9:</u>	<u>Unit 4:</u>	<u>Scripting</u>	
	Tuesday, October 29 <sup>th</sup> :	The Assignment	
	Thursday, October 31 <sup>st</sup> :	Structure and Plot	
	Friday, November 1 <sup>st</sup> :	Script Formats	
		CONTENT QUIZ #4	

Week 10:

Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>: IN-CLASS GROUP WORK  
 Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup>: IN-CLASS GROUP WORK  
 Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>: **IN-CLASS EXERCISE #4**

Week 11:

Tuesday, November 12<sup>h</sup>: IN-CLASS GROUP WORK  
 Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup>: IN-CLASS GROUP WORK  
 Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>: IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Week 12:

Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>: IN-CLASS GROUP WORK  
 Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup>: IN-CLASS GROUP WORK  
 Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>: IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Week 13:

Tuesday, November 26<sup>th</sup>: **All parts of group script assignment Due by 11PM**  
**Self- and Peer Evaluation Due by 11PM**  
 Thursday, November 28<sup>th</sup>: THANKSGIVING  
 Friday, November 29<sup>th</sup>: THANKSGIVING

Week 14: Unit 5: Continuity Writing

Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>: Storyboarding **Stovall, Chapters 10+11**  
 Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup>: Advertising and Tag Lines  
 Friday, December 6<sup>h</sup>: **IN-CLASS EXERCISE #5**

Week 15:

Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>: Concepting  
 Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>: Public Relations  
 Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>: **CONTENT QUIZ #5**

Week 16:

Note: UWSP’s Final Examination Policy: “No final or last exams will be given during the final week of classes. All instructors are expected to meet with their classes during the final examination period at the time and place scheduled...” For this class, Foundations of Media Writing, we will meet on **Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 8AM.**

### 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

