

Course Syllabus

COMM 107 Foundations of Media Writing
Fall Semester 2016

Professor Mark Tolstedt

Comm Arts Center #228

346-3920

mtolsted@uwsp.edu

Office Hours:

Thursdays: 1-3 PM

M/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. You will need the following information:

Username: **point315485**

Password: **Pointer2016**

Course Requirements and Grading:

AP Style Manual Quizzes:

There are four (4) online tests (administered through D2L) accounting for 100 points. You will need to have access the AP Style Manual when you take the quizzes.

These are to be completed by 11PM on the assigned due date. The exams are set to randomly generate questions when you open it. This means that you will have different questions than other students in the class. Also be aware that D2L will “autograde” the exams and when it does so, it is very, very case sensitive. I will go in and manually grade the exams after they close. In all likelihood, your point totals will go up after I have manually graded the exams.

Basics of Writing Quizzes:

There are nine (9) online tests (administered through D2L) accounting for 100 points. These are designed to test your understanding of the basic mechanics of writing. You should plan to have access to any of the style guides available online or in print when you take these quizzes. These are to be completed by 11PM on the assigned due date. The exams are set to randomly generate questions when you open it. This means that you will have different questions than other students in the class. Also be aware that D2L will “autograde” the exams and when it does so, it is very, very case sensitive. I will go in and manually grade the exams after they close. In all likelihood, your point totals will go up after I have manually graded the exams.

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 on Friday, October 7th by 11PM. 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 on Friday, December 9th by 11PM. 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 two-spaced pages (10 or 12-point type). The report should summarize the books major arguments or give "flashpoints" of a journalists 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 on Tuesday, September 20th by 11PM. 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 on Friday, November 18th by 11PM. A more complete assignment guide is available in the content area of D2L.

Point Totals and Grading Scale**Point Totals and Grading Scale:**

AP Style Manual Quizzes:	4@25	100
Basics of Writing Quizzes:	7@10 + 2 @15	100
The Aesop Exercise:		25
Nursery Rhyme Exercise:		25
Media Writing Book Report Assignment:		25
Group Script Formats Assignment:		50
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:		325

91%+	=	A	296-325
90%	=	A-	292-295
89%	=	B+	289-291
81%-88%	=	B	263-288
80%	=	B-	260-263
79%	=	C+	257-259
71%-78%	=	C	231-256

70%	=	C-	228-230
69%	=	D+	224-227
61%-68%	=	D	198-226
0%-60%	=	F	0-197

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:

-The online quizzes close on the date and at the time indicated in the course syllabus. 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 schedule exam. 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 three (3) classes that you miss, regardless of reason, your final letter grade will be reduced by a full letter grade.

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)

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 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: unless otherwise indicated, all assignments and quizzes are due by 11PM on the assigned due date.

Week 1:

Tuesday, September 6: Course Introduction
 Thursday, September 8: Unit 1: Prewriting
 Stovall, Chapter 1
 Friday, September 9: Understanding Research and Audience

Week 2:

Tuesday, September 13: Unit 2: Mechanics of Writing
 Stovall, Chapter 2
 Thursday, September 15: Grammar Basics
Basics of Writing Quiz 1 due by 11PM
 Phrases, Clauses and Sentences

Friday, September 16:

Week 3:

Tuesday, September 20: Subjects and Objects
Media Writing Book Report Assignment Due by 11PM
 Thursday, September 22: Subject-Verb Agreement
Basics of Writing Quiz 2 due by 11PM
 Friday, September 23: Punctuation

Week 4:

Tuesday, September 27: Unit 3: Journalism
 Stovall, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
 Thursday, September 29: Writing as a Journalist
Basics of Writing Quiz 3 due by 11PM
 Friday, September 30: AP Style Manual

Week 5:

Tuesday, October 4: Conciseness
Style Quiz 1 Due by 11PM

Thursday, October 6:	Leads and Angles
Friday, October 7:	Writing News for Print The Aesop Exercise Due by 11PM
<u>Week 6:</u>	
Tuesday, October 11:	Part 2 Style Quiz 2 Due by 11PM
Thursday, October 13:	Writing news for Broadcast
Friday, October 14:	Part 2
<u>Week 7:</u>	
Tuesday, October 18:	Writing news for the Web Style Quiz 3 Due by 11PM
Thursday, October 20:	Writing and Images
Friday, October 21:	Part 2 Style Quiz 4 Due by 11PM
<u>Week 8:</u>	
Tuesday, October 25:	Unit 4: Scriptwriting
Thursday, October 27:	Formatting Basics of Writing Quiz 4 due by 11PM
Friday, October 28:	Backstory, Characterization, Plot
<u>Week 9:</u>	
Tuesday, November 1:	Group Work
Thursday, November 3:	Group Work Basics of Writing Quiz 5 due by 11PM
Friday, November 4:	Group Work
<u>Week 10:</u>	
Tuesday, November 8:	Group Work
Thursday, November 10:	Group Work Basics of Writing Quiz 6 due by 11PM
Friday, November 11:	Group Work
<u>Week 11:</u>	
Tuesday, November 15:	Group Work
Thursday, November 17:	Group Work Basics of Writing Quiz 7 due by 11PM
Friday, November 18:	Group Work Group Script Formats Assignments Due by 11PM
<u>Week 12:</u>	
Tuesday, November 22:	NO CLASS
Thursday, November 24:	NO CLASS
Friday, November 25:	NO CLASS
<u>Week 13:</u>	
Tuesday, November 29:	Unit 5: Continuity Writing Stovall, Chapters 10 + 11
Thursday, December 1:	Concepting Basics of Writing Quiz 8 due by 11PM
Friday, December 2:	Part 2

Week 14:

Tuesday, December 6:

Headlines and Taglines

Thursday, December 8:

Storyboards

Friday, December 9:

Structure

Nursery Rhyme Exercise Due by 11PM

Week 15:

Tuesday, December 13:

Print/Radio/Television

Basics of Writing Quiz 9 due by 11PM

Thursday, December 15:

The Web

Final Exam Time:

Tuesday, December 20th 12:30-14:30

Note: although there is not a final examination in this class, I will be in the classroom at this time and 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

