

COURSE SYLLABUS—FALL 2009

Mass Communication 383.01—Writing for Public Relations & Advertising
MWF 9-10 a.m., Dan Rather Bldg., Room 205

PATSY K. ZIEGLER Office: Dan Rather Bldg., Room 208
Mass Communication Lecturer Office Hours: MW 8:30-9, 11-11:30 a.m. 4:30-5 p.m.;
Phone: 936-294-1499 F 8:30-9, 11-11:30 a.m.; TTh 10-11 a.m., 2-3 p.m. or by
E-mail: scm_pkz@shsu.edu appointment.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Doug Newsom & Jim Haynes, *Public Relations Writing: Form and Style, 8th Ed.*
Associated Press Stylebook, 2009 Printing

A good dictionary

A red pen or pencil

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Dedication to accuracy, accuracy, accuracy!

Building on the beginning mass communication writing course, MCM 132, this course gives students specific tools they will need when writing to persuade, and provides hands-on experience in the steps involved in various types of advertising and PR writing. By the end of the class, students should be able to demonstrate a competency in researching and strategizing writing approaches for a variety of ad and PR writing techniques.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the process of communicating to persuade and inform. Students learn the techniques of strategic thinking and practice writing for advertising and promotions, news media and special audience materials such as newsletters, brochures, and catalogues. The growing area of online communications for internal and external audiences will also be explored.

PREREQUISITE: MCM 132 CREDIT: 3

This is a combination lecture and lab course, with considerable hands-on writing and critiquing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

GRADING

Course grades will be based on a 500-point scale, which will include quizzes, research, writing projects and a final.

- Quizzes (24%) 120 pts.
There will be four quizzes @ 30 pts. each, based on class discussion and reading assignment
- Research assignment (14%) 75 pts.
One group assignment @ 75 pts. per member of group
- Writing projects (42%) 210 pts.
Six @ 35 pts. each. You will have one late ticket that will allow you to turn in one writing assignment up to one class period late without penalty. After that no late work will be accepted.
- Final (20%) 100 pts.
Show how much you've learned. Ace the final!

Ultimately, letter grades must be assigned to evaluations of course work. Under the definitions established by Sam Houston State University, students who receive the following letter grades are considered to have reached

the level of attainment defining that letter. Thus, letter grades received for journalism courses may be interpreted this way:

A=excellent B Well above average
C=Average D=Barely Passing
F=Failure

Grading throughout the semester; however, is conducted on a point scale. The combined value of all assignments is 500 points. Points are added or subtracted from that according to standards described in this analysis

500 – 450 pts = A

449 – 400 pts = B

399 – 350 pts = C

349 – 300 pts = D

< 300 pts = F

ATTENDANCE

A commitment of your time to this course is essential. Regular attendance is expected and will be necessary for successful completion of the course. You are responsible for any assignment made during class in your presence or absence. Save your late approvals for when you are ill or have an emergency. Otherwise, NO late work will be accepted and you will lose the points allotted for that assignment. It will not be possible to make up missed class sessions. Deadline, for class purposes, is the minute the class begins the day work is due, unless otherwise designated.

Do not come late to class. Follow professional procedures as you would a job. Punctuality is essential; class attendance is expected and will be recorded. After two (2) absences/tardies. 5 points will be deducted for each absence; 5 points will be given at the end of the semester to those having no more than one (1) absence/tardy.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

The classroom is equipped with new Dell GX270 computers. If you are not familiar with Personal Computers (PCs), let me know and I shall arrange an orientation session.

You will have storage space on the lab server; however, you may also wish to buy a writable CD for backup storage. You will need pencils with erasers for copy editing.

THERE WILL BE ABSOLUTELY NO DRINKING, EATING OR USING TOBACCO IN ROOM 205. LET'S KEEP THESE NEW COMPUTERS WORKING PERFECTLY AS LONG AS POSSIBLE!

Classroom Policies

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Ethical behavior is the cornerstone of responsible journalism. Honesty is expected—and demanded—of all students.

The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Furthermore, the University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work that is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Students found guilty of dishonest behavior in this class will be asked to leave the class and will be given the grade of “F” for the entire course.

PROPER CLASSROOM DEMEANOR OR CONDUCT

According to the Student Handbook, "Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Please turn off or mute your cellular phone and/or pager before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking among themselves at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a directive to leave class, or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy."

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The students' right to speak on the topics of their choice will be upheld in the class. Choice of topic, values and beliefs will not be judged. Audience members are expected to respect the views of their classmates.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discriminations under any academic, Student Life program or activity. Students with disabilities may request academic assistance when needed from a Committee for Continuing Academic Assistance for Disabled Students by visiting the director of the Counseling Center, located in the annex of the Lee Drain building across the sidewalk from Farrington Building, or call 936-294-1702. Accommodations for disabled students are decided based upon documentation and need on a case-by-case basis by the Counseling Center.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

University policy states that a student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day must take the examination or complete any assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. The student, not later than the 15th calendar day after the first day of the semester, or the 7th calendar day after the first day of a summer session, must notify the instructor of each scheduled class that he/she would be absent for a religious holy day (Faculty Handbook, 1.02-2).

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

BE AWARE OF THE DROP POLICY

A Q-drop is a drop made after the last date for tuition refunds (the 12th class day for fall/spring; the 4th class day for summer sessions), but before the date for which a drop would result in the grade of "F" as published in the Academic Calendar.

Students will be allowed no more than five (5) Q-drops during their academic career at Sam Houston State University. Classes that are dropped prior to the Q-Drop date will not count toward the limit. Students who have used their limit of (5) Q-Drops will need to petition their respective dean to drop a class. If the dean refuses permission to drop a class, a student will be required to remain in the class.

This limit took effect at the start of the fall 2004 semester. Any drops accumulated prior to the fall of 2004 will not be included in the five Q-Drop limit, nor will Q-Drops from other universities.

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THE SAM HOUSTON WRITING CENTER

The writing center provides services to undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff and the community. It is open Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Sunday from 2 until 7 p.m. It is located in room 111 in the Farrington Building.

Next door to the Writing Center is a Reading Center, available to all. If you find yourself having trouble understanding assignments, visit the Reading Center. Down the hall there is a Math Lab.

MCM 383.01 CLASS SCHEDULE FALL 2009

Week 1—August 24-26-28 Intro to class

ASSIGNMENT: Read Ch. 1 before Aug. 26 class

PROJECTS: Write paper on intentions for your career; discuss.

Week 2— Aug. 31-Sept. 2-4. Terminology in Ch. 1.

ASSIGNMENT 1: A persuasive letter to parents about campus parking problems.

LABOR DAY—Sept. 7

Week 3—Sept. 9-11 A look at advertising: Ch. 12—What constitutes a good ad? Eye appeal: Compatible type faces, pleasing color combinations, appropriate art and/or photos, a visual AND written message that makes you want to buy or at least try—the product.

ASSIGNMENT 2: Compare two ads—one you don't like and one you do. Explain "why."
Turn in your ads along with your 1-2-page commentary.

Week 4—Sept. 14-16-18. Creativity, PR writer's ethical & legal responsibilities

Read Ch. 2 : Thinking outside the box, the big idea

Research sources, skepticism and credibility

ASSIGNMENT 3: Creative ideas, "rough" ad campaign for assignment.

Week 5—Sept. 21-23-25 Persuasion. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTER IN THE BOOK! (Read Ch. 3 before Sept. 21 class.)

9/25: QUIZ 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 12

Week 6—Sept. 28-30, Oct. 2.

Writing news for print and broadcast media

Read Chs. 9 & 10 (read Ch. 9 before 9/29 class & Ch. 10 before 10/1 class)

ASSIGNMENT 4: Attend simulated press conference, write news release

Week 7—Oct.5-7-9. ASSIGNMENT 5: Research team projects—75 pts. each.

Meet at Newton Gresham Library in the basement, Room 157, on Oct. 5 for session on researching your team's project—MANDATORY!!!! TURN-IN DEADLINE:

Outline for position paper. For Oct. 7 study Pp. 93-108 in Ch. 5: Be prepared to discuss in class in relation to your team's topic. (Each team must have a distinct topic—no repeats.)

Week 8—Oct. 12-14-16 Features for print and broadcast media

RESEARCH CONTINUES---

ASSIGNMENT: Read Ch. 11 before 10/14 class

QUIZ 2: The assigned portion of Ch. 5, plus Chs. 9, 10, & 11

Week 9—Oct. 19-21-23. Completing a research package: fact sheet, position paper with slide presentation, plus individual feature on topic relating to subject of position paper.

RESEARCH PROJECT. In-class presentations.

SUPPLY FACT SHEET TO EACH CLASS MEMBER BEFORE YOUR PRESENTATION

QUIZ 3: Research class presentations—listen carefully and take notes on the names, dates and places of the specifics of each team's information.

Week 10—Oct. 26-28-30. Advertising Copywriting

ASSIGNMENT 6: Read Ch. 13 before Oct. 26 class.

DEVELOP an AD CAMPAIGN for product OR service of your choice. Coordinate a print ad (either newspaper or magazine), with a broadcast ad and a for-sale specialty item for a for-profit organization OR create the campaign for a not-for-profit organization, including a print ad, a PSA for broadcast and a give-away specialty item.

Week 11—Nov. 2-4-6. Continuation of ad copywriting

Direct response, direct advertising, out-of-home media, sales promotion

Week 12—Nov. 9-11-13. Copywriting for electronic media PSAs, laws controlling broadcast ads, Pp. 264-274.

ASSIGNMENT 7: Create a banner, spot or display ad for a Website

QUIZ 4: Ch. 13, Appendices A & B.

Week 13—Nov. 16-18-20. Special audience publications

Read Ch. 17 before Nov. 16

ASSIGNMENT: Create a 4-page newsletter for an internal SHSU audience. (Do NOT plagiarize! It's an easy way to flunk the course.)

Week 14-15---Nov. 23 (Thanksgiving 25-29)-- (Nov. 30-Dec. 2-4) Special audience publications

Read Ch. 18 before Nov. 30.

ASSIGNMENT: Create a 6-panel brochure to attract visitors to Huntsville.

Week 15-16—Dec. 7-9-11---REVIEW for Final Exam

Read Ch. 14—An extra-credit web page assignment will be available, for those who want to complete it. I must receive it by Dec. 11 for it to count.

FINAL EXAM: Dec. 16—8-10 a.m.