

Class Meets: Online

Office Hours: Virtual and by appointment

Text: *Strategic Writing: Multimedia Writing for Public Relations, Advertising and More, Third Edition.* Marsh, Guth, Short. Long and New York: Routledge.
ISBN 9780205031979

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course number: MCOM 3385.01
Course title: Advanced Writing For Public Relations and Advertising
Credit hours: 3
Spring 2016
Class location/times: Online

Instructor: Bruce O'Neal, Ph.D.
Dan Rather 310
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Online messages will be answered as quickly as possible. I check for questions daily on weekdays and at least once over the weekend. If there is an emergency or I must be offline for more than two business days, I will send an email to everyone.

DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course emphasizes the strategic, goal-oriented mission of high-quality media writing. Using a multidisciplinary and multimedia approach, students will learn to write successful and strategically for public relations, advertising, sales, marketing, and business communications formats.

OBJECTIVES

The principal goal for this class is:

1) To develop specific skills, competencies and points of view needed by professionals in public relations and/or advertising.

These will include:

- Building strong research and interviewing skills
- Learning to properly attribute information in journalistic style
- Practicing your skills in organizing information and writing clearly

- Using quotes effectively

To develop the skills listed above, it is important that you:

A) Learn to apply course material to improve thinking, problem solving and decisions

B) Develop skills in expressing yourself through writing

PURPOSE

This class builds on the communication skills developed through previous classes and focuses on creating finished projects that are professional in every respect and are publication ready. Students will create materials that can be included in their portfolios.

TEXT & MATERIALS REQUIRED

TEXTS

- C. Marsh, D.W. Guth and B.P. Short, *Strategic Writing: Multimedia Writing for Public Relations, Advertising and More, Third Edition* (2012), Routledge (required)

You'll need to purchase and read the text. Test material will be taken from the readings, course notes, blog postings and forum discussions.

OTHER MATERIALS

- Additional information will be posted online and assigned for reading or viewing.
- SHSU email account

EQUIPMENT

You must have access to computer hardware and software that is compatible with the SHSU Blackboard platform. Please review the Blackboard tutorial regarding computer requirements.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

EXAMS/ASSIGNMENTS

Course grades will be based on a percentage scale (see scale below), which will include online forum and blog postings, research and writing projects, and quizzes. Work is divided into six modules. Also, a writing blog will hone your grammar and style skills. Quizzes may be drawn from readings.

Specifically, points will be accumulated as follows:

- 1) One (1) personal profile assignment 5%

2) Mid-semester presentation	20%
3) Blog postings, discussions, online interaction	25%
4) Individual course projects	25%
5) Final project	25%

Complete descriptions and grading criteria will be provided for each assignment. Grades for this class are based on total points earned as shown on the grade scale below.

FORMAT & MEDIUM FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments must be submitted EXACTLY as instructed in the assignment criteria. Be sure to submit your work in the format and style specified. Assignments must be submitted by Blackboard. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. Please adjust your schedule to make sure assignments are submitted prior to due dates/times.

GRADING

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 communication 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. Points are added or subtracted according to standards described in this syllabus. In this class you will accumulate points toward a final grade. There will be no percentage weighting of assignments (i.e. grading on a curve). The grade in the course will be determined using the following scale (Unfortunately, SHSU does not allow instructors to assign a wider range of grades--such as A-, B+, etc):

90% — 100% = A

80% — 89% = B

70% — 79% = C

60% — 69% = D

50% — 59% = F(ailing)

All grades will be posted online and may be accessed by the student at any point during the semester. A final class grade will not be released over the phone or via email. However, students may determine their final class grades by comparing the totals to the scale above.

Students who cannot complete the course requirements due to illness or another unforeseen issue may apply for an X in the course. To apply for the incomplete, the student must submit in writing to the instructor a documented explanation. The request will be submitted to the college dean for a final decision.

Note: I do not typically assign extra-credit. Additionally, please note that I do not round-up any scores including the final class grade.

ATTENDANCE

Doing well in online courses requires a determined commitment of your time, strong organizational and problem-solving skills, and the use of personal initiative. You will be required to meet all deadlines for your work to be graded and included in your point total for the semester.

RESOURCES

SAM HOUSTON WRITING CENTER

The Sam Houston Writing Center, located in Farrington 111, is open from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Friday, and 2 - 7 p.m. on Sunday. Writing tutors will work with you at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming, generating a draft, organizing a draft, or revising a draft) for any written assignment. The Writing Center operates on an appointment system, so please call (936) 294-3680 to schedule a session with a writing tutor. Skype sessions are available for distance students, and a tutor is available at the University Center. See website for more information: shsu.edu/wctr.

POLICIES

ACADEMIC HONESTY: ORIGINAL WORK & PLAGIARISM

Ethics are the cornerstone of responsible communication. Honesty is expected—and demanded—of all students. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Violations of professional ethical standards can lead to an automatic "F" in the course.

All work in this class must be original work. No work that a student has already published or is in the process of publishing is considered original work. No work a student has used to meet requirements in a previous class is considered original work.

Plagiarized assignments will not be accepted. For the sake of clarity, plagiarism is defined below:

Plagiarism occurs when one person claims credit for another person's work. It is a form of intellectual dishonesty that is treated with great severity by professionals and by the

university. Students are encouraged to review the university's policy on plagiarism.

Students should be certain they understand the meaning of plagiarism: a paper using quoted material without quotation marks and attribution is plagiarized. But plagiarism is more than unrecognized quotes. Conclusions that are not the student's, information that is not common knowledge, and specific facts must be attributed: tell who said it and attribute it, even if the information is not a direct quote. Dates are important, especially as on-line information is becoming more common.

Other Administrative Matters

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy #861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made two weeks in advance of when the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or

examination are to be completed.

CLASS EVALUATION

You will be asked to complete an online evaluation of this class and the instructor toward the end of the semester using the IDEA system. These evaluations are taken very seriously by SHSU administrators and faculty, so please take time to provide your thoughtful feedback.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Please review these university policies regarding student participation in class: Academic Dishonesty Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Students with Disabilities

Visitors in the Classroom Web link: shsu.edu/syllabus/

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I know what is happening in the class?

It is your responsibility to check regularly (at least every other day) for announcements. Also check your email regularly for bulletins and reminders.

Where do I begin?

First, log into the course and look carefully at the options on the left side of the screen. Note there is a [HELP & HOW TO](#) section to help you with problems using the site and giving you the 24/7 Helpdesk for tech support. It is wise to explore the Bb Student Orientation if you have not taken an online class at SHSU previously.

Next, review the [COURSE INFORMATION](#) unit. Read the Syllabus carefully. Examine the Class Schedule (It is a good idea to put the deadlines listed there in your personal planner.) Deadlines for posted assignments will appear on the calendar (also under Course Information).

Then look under the [COURSE CONTENT](#) section and open Module 1 to get started. Each module includes an outline of important information, a list of assignments for that portion of the course and resources to help you successfully complete the module. When the assignments have been completed, you will be instructed to go to the [QUIZZES](#) module to take a quiz over the module material.

If I still have questions about an assignment, how do I ask a question?

After reading the syllabus and carefully reviewing all resources available for an assignment, if you still have questions, contact the instructor via email or phone. Between Monday and Friday (except holidays), the instructor will make every effort to

respond within 24 hours. It is also possible to schedule a conference with the instructor in her office or via phone.

When are assignments due?

Due dates are included in each module, on the course schedule and on the calendar as they are posted. It is a good idea to put those dates in your planner since projects are time-consuming.

How are assignments submitted?

Specific directions are provided with each assignment and should be followed precisely to obtain a favorable grade. Projects will be submitted in an online (BlackBoard) DropBox according to directions supplied with the assignment.

How are my grades on assignments determined?

A list of grading criteria is provided with each assignment. Grades will be posted in the online grade book under the [QUICK LINKS](#) section.

What happens if I miss a deadline for an assignment?

No late assignments are accepted unless with a university approved excuse. Please submit assignments when they are due. Assignments not submitted by due date earn a zero (0).

What if there are technical problems (like the Blackboard site going down)?

Allowances will be made if such difficulties arise. Typically, the instructor will extend the deadline so assignments can be submitted without penalty. Remember to contact the 24/7 Helpdesk with any technical problems—sometimes difficulties are related to software issues on the computer you are using.

Tentative Course Schedule – MCOM 3385

Week	Assignments
Week 1	Intro: Module 1 READ: Section I: Strategic Writing in text (pp. 1-39)
Week 2	Personal Profile Assignment Quiz #1
Week 3	Module 2 Introduction to Project 1 READ: Section II: Strategic Writing in PR (pp. 41-115) Forum #1
Week 4	Writing blog A
Week 5	Project 1 Quiz 2
Week 6	Module 3 Introduction to Project 2 READ: Section III: Strategic Writing in Advertising (pp. 119-160) Project 2 (SMP)
Week 7	Mid-term conference (Skype, Google Hangout or phone) Project 2 (Video scripts)

Week 8	Writing blog B Project 2 (Peer review
Week 9	Project 2 (Final version Social Media News Release
Week 10	Module 4 Introduction to Project 3 READ: Section IV: Strategic Writing in Sales & Marketing (pp. 165-187) Project 1 (Rewrite)
Week 11	Writing blog C
Week 12	Project 3 (Job Request Letter + Resume)
Week 13 11/15 -11/21	Project 3 (Final) Module 5 READ: Section V: Strategic Writing in Business Communication (pp. 199-230) Introduction to Project III (Final + presentation) :: Business Report Bad-news Letter Request Letter Rewrite Project 4 (Job request)

Week 14	Project 4 (Job openings)
Week 15	Writing Blog Project III (Final + presentation) Module 6: Wrap-up Project 3 (Self review): Due by 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13
Week 16	

Instructor reserves the right to modify syllabus as necessary.

**Please consult Blackboard for detailed assignment information and due dates
as assignments in the syllabus may change.**