

Writing for Strategic Media

JRSM 7422-S01

Spring 2022

W 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. via Zoom

Prof. Kim Marks Malone, APR, Fellow PRSA

Office: 334A Meeman Journalism Building

Office Hours: Monday, 3 – 4 p.m.; Tuesday, 1 – 4 p.m.; Wednesday, 3 – 4 p.m.; other hours by appointment

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Catalog Description

Writing for all aspects of public relations and advertising, with a specific focus on writing for audio/visual and social media platforms, including translating one message across multiple technologies and platforms. Focus will be on writing in an active, engaging voice that aligns with the organization's mission and profile.

Prerequisites

Graduate status

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

- Handley, A., & Chapman, C.C. (2012). Content rules: How to create killer blogs, podcasts, videos, ebooks, webinars (and more) that engage customers and ignite your business. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons
ISBN 978-1-118-23260-6
- Handley, A. (2014). Everybody writes: Your guide to creating ridiculously good content. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley
ISBN 978-1-118-90555-5

Additional course readings will be available on Canvas. A tentative list of readings is included in the syllabus; course readings may be altered during the semester.

Recommended

- The Associated Press Stylebook 2020 (or earlier). New York: Basic Books
ISBN: 978-0-917360-68-8

*You can also access The AP Stylebook as an online publication or through an app. Get details about these options online at apstylebook.com

Synchronous Class Format (S01)

- Zoom is a web-based video conferencing platform. The link for the Zoom meeting is posted in Canvas.
- This is a graduate seminar with lecture and class discussions. Each week, we will discuss a new topic and I and/or designated classmates will be responsible for presenting the class with ideas for debate from the readings or examples from the field, and critically

analyze the week's concepts. Please note that failure to attend class or to actively take part – even if all your assignments are turned in on time and done acceptably – will significantly affect your final grade. Be sure you have read the material BEFORE class and come prepared to discuss it.

- You need to have video turned on during class. Let me know if this is going to be an issue for you.
- You must have Microsoft Word software. I must be able to open your work to grade it. Work submitted in a software package not noted as acceptable in this syllabus (Microsoft Word) may result in point deductions being assessed to your work.

Students who attend graduate courses online meet in real time via the videoconferencing program Zoom and must plan to spend three hours a week in class, per class. Students will need an Internet connection, speakers and a mic (or a headset with a built-in mic). This form of instruction is referred to as "synchronous" and is the signature teaching method at The University of Memphis.

Online students must have a dedicated Internet connection with stable signal to support video conferencing. Students must be in a quiet place where they can fully participate in the courses. Zoom cameras must be turned on for the duration of the class period.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis Canvas login page:
<https://memphis.instructure.com>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. On the Dashboard, click on the course card for JRSM 7422-S01.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

This is meant as a general guideline to the major assignments within the class. More detail will be provided in class and on Canvas. Deadlines are also listed in the class schedule. All work should be turned in as a Word document via Dropbox in Canvas by the deadline specified in the assignment.

Discussant, 15%. Each student will take the lead on a discussion for class one week. You will each sign up for your week in advance. **The discussant will write a two-page essay discussing the week's readings and (1) post it to the discussion board and (2) submit the essay as a Word document to Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday before the scheduled class. You each will be required to read the discussant's essay in addition to the week's readings.** During the class session, the discussant will take the lead on the class seminar for their topic(s).

Weekly "blog" discussion posts, 20%. You each will be asked to respond to the weekly readings in the form of a 250-word blog post. The idea is not to regurgitate the readings but to analyze them by providing insights and comments that demonstrate knowledge and deep thinking about theories, methods, and concepts found in the week's assigned readings. You may make connections to readings from other weeks and/or connections to something you have read about or learned in popular media or another course. The intent is for you to interact with the material in such a way as to be prepared to discuss it in class, and to write out your thoughts on the ideas presented. The purpose of this assignment is also to help you develop your voice as a

writer throughout the semester. The blog format is designed to allow you maximum flexibility in finding creative, engaging and fun ways to synthesize the readings and develop killer content.

You will be given a prompt each week to help guide the direction of your writing. Be sure to have your discussion post at hand during class to help remember your ideas and connections during the class discussion.

You will NOT be required to submit a discussion post the week that you are the discussion leader. Your presentation/questions will take the place of the discussion post grade.

Discussion posts will be graded on (1) content – post addresses all questions asked and is appropriate in length to stimulate further discussion (250 – 300 words), clearly relates to the main topic and includes several supporting details and/or examples; (2) contribution – post is thoughtful, analytical and original; (3) connection – you make connections between course content, readings, and personal reflection, current events, etc.; (4) mechanics – post is well-structured, logical, free of grammatical and spelling errors.

HubSpot Academy Content Strategy Course. As part of this class you will be required to complete the free Content Strategy Course through HubSpot Academy. You can sign up for the free course here > <https://academy.hubspot.com/> The course consists of eight lessons and six quizzes and should take approximately four hours to complete. You'll be required to upload a screenshot of your completion certificate to Dropbox to earn credit.

You should successfully complete this course and upload a screenshot of your completion certificate to Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, March 20.

Cleaning Your Copy: Grammar, Style and More quiz. This free self-directed course from Poynter will help you understand the basics of grammar, spelling, punctuation and AP style. It will also help you brush up on your skills to create clean, error-free copy throughout the semester (and beyond). You should set aside approximately four hours to complete this online module. You can access the free course here > <https://www.poynter.org/courses/cleaning-your-copy/>

You should successfully complete this course and upload a screenshot of your completion certificate to Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 20.

Organizational strategic media analysis paper. You will choose an organization and conduct a complete and thorough “audit” and analysis of their strategic media (at least what you can find externally). This paper is purely an analysis of what the organization is doing and will not offer suggestions for improvement. This analysis paper will form the first half of the larger strategic media content proposal that you will complete later in the semester. More details will be provided in class and on Canvas.

The organizational analysis paper is due as a Word document in Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 27.

Podcast. You will create a 5- to 6-minute podcast script and recording on a topic of your choice. The topic can be anything of interest to you. The podcast should include an introduction monologue (30 – 60 seconds), musical jingle (15 seconds), one topic point (3 minutes), closing

remarks (1 – 2 minutes), and closing music jingle (15 seconds). Both the script and the audio recording should be uploaded to Dropbox. More details will be provided in class and on Canvas.

The podcast script and recording are due in Dropbox NLT 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, May 1

White paper. You will write a 5- to 7-page white paper on a single topic related to the core mission of the organization you are analyzing throughout the semester. For example, if you are analyzing an organization focused on the environment, you could write a white paper in support of proposed legislation that would improve environmental regulations in your community. Because white papers serve as authoritative guides that address issues and how to solve them, you are required to include at least 5 academic sources to support your arguments in this paper. More details will be provided in class and on Canvas.

The white paper is due as a Word document in Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 17.

Strategic media proposal. Using your organizational audit from earlier in the semester, you will respond to a request for proposals (RFP) put out by the same organization to hire a PR firm to help them improve their writing and messaging strategies. This proposal should demonstrate your knowledge of the organization's current practices and offer a detailed strategy for improvement. This should also include sample messages for all social media platforms the organization is currently active on, the website, and other prominent channels used by the organization. You may also suggest new platforms to use and include sample messages and strategies for this. This proposal should be visually appealing and be easy to read for the prospective client. Remember that you want to sell your knowledge and your plan of action for the organization. More details will be provided in class and on Canvas.

The strategic media proposal is due as a Word or .PDF document in Dropbox at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 24.

Final presentation. For your final presentation, you will be pitching to me and your classmates as if we were in charge of hiring the outside PR firm to help the organization improve its messaging and writing on our current platforms, as well as any recommendations you have for new platforms. You will have only 5 – 7 minutes for your pitch, so you will want it to be focused, persuasive and include information from the research you conducted throughout your organizational audit and strategic media content proposal. This isn't an overview presentation of everything you've done. You are trying to make a persuasive argument to us based on your research about changes our organization should make or practices that we should continue. You will be graded on the soundness of your arguments, your ability to integrate both research you conducted as well as external research into the presentation, and general presentation delivery skills. You will also be deducted points for going over time.

Your final presentation is due as a link or file NLT 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27. Your final presentations will happen in class on Wednesday, April 27. (The last day of class.)

Grading

Weekly blog discussion posts	15%
Discussant	20%
Assignments	25%

Strategic Media Proposal & Presentation	30%
Class participation	10%

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4% B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4% C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4% D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4% F 0-59.4%

Other issues

Contacting me. The best and quickest way to contact me is via email (ksmarks@memphis.edu). Do not use the email within Canvas, use my Memphis.edu email. I will respond to email with 24 – 48 hours. If you have a problem, do not let it snowball. Contact me ASAP.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSJ 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSJ 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or Squarespace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

Weather policy

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the University is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

Student support

Students who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

COVID-19 protocols for this course

COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy - Masks and Social Distancing

Faculty, staff, students and visitors are expected to monitor current health and safety measure requirements posted to our website and shared through other official communication channels including, but not limited to University email. Definitions related to those requirements and enforcement mechanisms appear in the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy \(GE2040\)](#). **Please be reminded that the University currently requires that all persons, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors and in places where appropriate social distancing is not possible.**

Classroom experiences from recent semesters have shown that the campus community generally understands and complies voluntarily with the mask requirement. The policy does permit faculty members to take action for non-compliance of mask use. Additionally, if students have concerns about faculty or staff mask use, contact Human Resources at hr@memphis.edu or 901.678.3573. Faculty who are delivering on-campus instruction may remove their face mask to teach, provided they are located within a delineated teaching area that is no less than 6 feet from students.

Student Health

Students who are experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing or a higher than normal temperature should inform me by email so they can be excused from class and should stay home. Students should contact their health care provider or the Student Health Center at <https://www.memphis.edu/health/>.

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@memphis.edu or 901.678.2187.

Testing & Notification

The University will continue to provide testing for the entire campus community. The details regarding test availability and locations can be found [here](#). Do not come to campus if you are experiencing symptoms, are in isolation or quarantine due to positive test results or exposure, pending test results, or have reason to believe you have come in contact with the virus.

Student Resources

Students who need additional resources can contact the Dean of Students Office at <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>.

Guidelines for classes, labs and equipment in Meeman Journalism Building in Spring 2022

- Anyone feeling sick should stay home.
- Social distance from all others at least 6 feet when possible.
- Wear a mask at all times when in University buildings and outside when social distancing isn't possible.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- No more than one person in the elevator at a time.
- Disinfect your workstation before and after use, including desks, keyboards, mice and screens. Wash your hands after cleaning.
- Air purifiers must run at all times during class meetings.