

COM 161 – Convergent Media Writing

Fall 2019, School of Communication, Illinois State University

Lab Instructor: Adam Brockman

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Office: Fell 053

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 1pm – 2pm

Teaching Times: Section 002 – Friday, 9 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.

Section 003 – Friday, 10 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.

Learning Objectives:

Convergent Media Writing will prepare students:

- To develop a critical understanding of quality print, radio, television and feature film writing.
- To develop writing skills sufficient to write for print, radio, television, or film
- To acclimate students to the demands of writing for a living. Toward this end, students will be faced with seemingly incessant and fast approaching deadlines and upheld to professional rigor.

Assignments and Evaluation Opportunities:

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Online Quizzes	100 points
Lab Exercises	60 points
Participation	10 points
Peer Editing	30 points
Assignment 1: (Straight Print) News Story or Press Release	100 points
Assignment 2: (Feature Print) News Story or Press Release	100 points
Assignment 3: Radio News Story	100 points
Assignment 4: Television News / Video Media Release	100 points
Assignment 5: Television Announcement	100 points
Midterm Exam (Take-home, open-book)	50 points
Final Exam (Take-home, open-book)	50 points
Final Project	200 points
Total:	1000 points

Scale:

A: 900-1000 points

B: 800-899 points

C: 700-799 points

D: 600-699 points

F: <600 points

***** The total points in the course is subject to change throughout the semester.**

Academic Policies

Grading: With the exception of exams and quizzes, I assign and grade everything for the course. Dr. McHale, other lab instructors, and undergraduate TAs are all great resources to use, but always come to me for specific questions about grading. You'll likely hear about assignments and policies in other lab sections, but because those sections have their own rules, focus only on the guidelines from me and the course textbook.

Attendance / Participation: Attendance for lab is mandatory. Think of Fridays as your third day of COM 161 for the week, just at a different time and with a different instructor. You will sign an attendance sheet every class period, and your attendance will affect your overall participation grade at the end of the semester. If you have to miss lab, make sure you communicate that with me in advance. That way, I can give you a makeup assignment to get you caught up and ensure you get credit for that week's lab.

Major Writing Assignments: You'll submit all these assignments at the beginning of lab the day they're due, and I will be the one grading them. These assignments must be typed with the following guidelines:

- 1-inch margins; 12-point font in Times New Roman **only**. Everything is double-spaced, except for the information in the upper left corner (Name, Date, Assignment #, Section #). That information is single-spaced. Also be sure to **staple** your assignment when you turn it in.
- Carefully review the "Grading Criteria and Evaluation Guidelines" on page 241 of the course textbook. They apply to all major writing assignments, and they are very different from those in other writing courses. Thoroughly understanding each of those guidelines is essential to passing the course.

Exercises: I will usually assign exercises the week before a major writing assignment is due. You'll submit these on the lab's Reggiet page before the specified deadline.

Late Policy: All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Late assignments will not be accepted without a reasonable excuse and you have made arrangements with me. Predictable problems, such as printer glitches or running out of paper, are not excuses for turning in work late. Think of me as your editor when you have assignments due – you're expected to turn your work in on time, and if anything severe prevents you from doing so, you should communicate that to me as soon as possible.

Miscellaneous Lab Policies

- I usually have extended office hours the weeks major writing assignments are due. I'll demonstrate in lab how to sign up for them. Please arrive at my office hours with specific questions so we can make the most of the time we have.
- Questions via email are always encouraged. I tend to respond at 3 a.m., but I will always get back with you as soon as possible.

Other Helpful Resources

Campus Safety and Security: If you haven't already, take a minute to sign up for ISU Emergency Alerts at IllinoisState.edu/EmergencyAlert.

Mental Health: Life at college can get complicated. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, lost, anxious, depressed or are struggling with personal issues, do not hesitate to call or visit [Student Counseling Services](#) (SCS). These services are free and completely confidential. SCS is located at 320 Student Services Building, 309-438-3655.

Absence Due to Illness or Bereavement: If you have to miss class due to an [extended illness](#) (3 or more consecutive class days) or a [bereavement](#), the [Dean of Students Office](#) can help. It's located in Room 387 in the Student Services Building.

Tentative Lab Schedule

Week 1 Friday, Aug. 23	Review Syllabus Differences Between Lab and Lecture Thinking Like a Dramatist Student Introductions Assigned: AP Exercise 1
Week 2 Friday, Aug 30	Due: AP Exercise 1 Review AP Exercise 1 Introduce AP Style Guidelines AP Style Activity / Dramturgical Theory Student Introductions (continue if needed) Assigned: AP Exercise 2
Week 3 Friday, Sept. 6 Assignment 1 Macro Week	Due: AP Exercise 2 Due: News Story / Release Example Link Briefly Review AP Exercise 2 Introduce Assignment 1 Inverted Pyramid Activity Assigned: Assignment 1 Outline
Week 4 Friday, Sept. 13 Assignment 1 Micro Week	Due: Assignment 1 Outline Sentence Structure / Drafting Assignment 1 Grammar Activity Assignment 1 Due Next Week
Week 5 Friday, Sept. 20 Assignment 2 Macro Week	Due: Assignment 1 Due: Feature Story Example Link Copyditing Exercise Introduce Assignment 2 Dramatic Writing Activity Assigned: Assignment 2 Outline
Week 6 Friday, Sept. 27 Assignment 2 Micro Week	Due: Assignment 2 Outline Ethical Considerations Creative Sentence Structure Activity

	Last-minute Assignment 2 Questions Assignment 2 Due Next Week
Week 7 Friday, Oct. 4 Assignment 3 Macro Week	Due: Assignment 2 Copyediting Exercise Introduce Assignment 3 Broadcast vs. Print Radio News Writing Activity Assigned: Assignment 3 Outline
Week 8 Friday, Oct. 11 Assignment 3 Micro Week	Due: Assignment 3 Outline Broadcast Writing Activity Critically Evaluating Radio News Assignment 3 Due Next Week
Week 9 Friday, Oct. 18 Assignment 4 Macro Week	Due: Assignment 3 Copyediting Exercise Introduce Assignment 4 / Inception Writing for Visual Media – TV News Assigned: TV News Prewriting Exercise
Week 10 Friday, Oct. 25 Assignment 4 Micro Week	Due: TV News Prewriting Exercise Drafting Assignment 4 News Story Scripting Guidelines Assigned: Assign 4 Draft / Inception login
Week 11 Friday, Nov. 1 Assignment 4 “Super-Micro” Week	Due: Assign. 4 Draft / Inception login Pasting Assign. 4 Draft into Inception Last-minute Assignment 4 Questions Assigned: Assignment 4 Due Next Week
Week 12 Friday, Nov. 8 Assignment 5 Macro Week	Due: Assignment 4 Copyediting Exercise Introduce Assignment 5 Television storyboarding Persuasive Appeals in Television Introduce Final Project Assigned: Assignment 5 Outline
Week 13 Friday, Nov. 15 Assignment 5 Micro Week	Due: Assignment 5 Outline Reverse engineering visual writing Sample Storyboard Activity Assigned: Assignment 5 Due Next Week
Week 14 Friday, Nov. 22	Due: Assignment 5 Dramatic Writing for Film and Television Fundamentals of Good Dialogue Documentary Storytelling

Week 15 Friday, Nov. 29	Thanksgiving Break – No Class
Week 16 Friday, Dec. 6	Due: Final Project Final Exam Review Life Advice – BEST DAY OF CLASS