**Lab Instructor:** Sarah Aten

COM161 – Convergent Media Writing

Fall 2019, School of Communication, Illinois State University

**E-mail:** smaten1@ilstu.edu

**Office:** Fell 053

**Office Hours:** Monday 3 p.m. – 4 p.m., Wednesday 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Teaching Times:** Section 004 – Friday, 11 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.

Section 005 – Friday, 12 p.m. – 12:50 p.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:**

**Assignments and Evaluation Opportunities: Points are not rounded up**

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 Story (VO/SOT) 100 points

Assignment 5: PSA or Advertisement 100 points

Out-of-class Exercises 100 points

Exams (Midterm/Final) 100 points

Final Project 200 points

Participation/Attendance 100 points

**Total: 1000 points**

**Scale:**

A: 900-1000 points

B: 800-899 points

C: 700-799 points

D: 600-699 points

F: <600 points

**Academic Policies**

**Grading:** With the exception of exams and possible 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 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’ll earn 5 points for coming to lab each week.

If you are unable to attend lab, you must let me know BEFORE class starts in order to make up participation for that day. If you email be prior to the start of class, I can send you an alternative assignment to complete.

If a major assignment is due on lab day and you are unable to attend lab, you must turn it in early. I encourage you to work on assignments early and to print them out before Friday morning, in case of printer emergency.

Attendance counts for 80 points total, and the remaining 20 participation points are based on lecture attendance and the grade defense (I’ll discuss the grade defense at the end of the semester).

**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 Reggienet page before the specified deadline.

**Late Policy:** All major writing assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Unless I have granted an extension, I will deduct 10 points each day an assignment is late (this includes Saturday and Sunday). Predictable problems, such as printer glitches or running out of paper, are not excuses for turning in work late. Also, because exercises and makeup assignments are meant to prepare you for the major writing assignments, those cannot be turned in late at all unless we have made other arrangements.

**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 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](http://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](https://counseling.illinoisstate.edu/) (SCS). These services are free and completely confidential. SCS is located at 320 Student Services Building, 309-438-3655. They are a great resource and I encourage you to check them out if you are feeling overwhelmed. I’d be happy to walk you to counseling services after class, if you need someone to accompany you.

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

**Tentative Lab Schedule**

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| **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**  **Assigned: Straight News Story / Press Release Example Link** |
| **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  **Assigned: Feature Story Example Link**  **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** |