

Writing for Social Media

PBRL 3441-001

Fall 2022

Monday/Wednesday, 12:40p.m. – 2:05 p.m., Meeman Room 202

Prof. Sheri D. Neely, MBA

Office: 330 Meeman Journalism Building

Office Hours: Monday, 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Tuesday, 10 am. – 11 a.m.;

3:30 p.m. – 4:30

p.m.

Wednesday, 3 p.m. – 4

p.m.

Other hours by

appointment.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Development of strategic writing skills to write effectively across various social media platforms with an emphasis on the need to tailor the message to both the audience and the platform through which it is communicated. Topics explored will include style, repurposing of content, specific requirements for various platforms, organizational voice, SEO and strategic message development.

Prerequisites

None

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

- *Social Media for Strategic Communication*. Freberg, K. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-5063-8710-9.
- Other readings and supplemental materials will be assigned and posted to eCourseware.
- Access to social media accounts – either personal or newly opened for this class.

Classroom Format

This class will be presented through lectures, discussions, multimedia, and case studies both in class and utilizing online platforms including eCourseware and social media sites. This class will meet in person twice a week in room 100. Regular attendance and participation in class is expected and will affect your grade. Part of academic success at the collegiate level is being able to add to discussions with informed ideas and thoughts, as well as being willing to ask questions if you are unsure about anything. There will be many opportunities to contribute, engage, or explore topics that may be confusing or unclear in class,

and I encourage each and every one of you to speak up when appropriate. Remember there is no such

thing as a stupid question.

Class discussions taking place both online and in person should remain respectful and professional, and show respect to all people regardless of background, sex, race, or any other factor. Hate speech will not be tolerated in my classroom and I reserve the right to ask any student to leave if they violate this boundary. Remember: Public relations is all about creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships and our classroom should be no different.

This class is meant to serve as an introduction to public relations and the fundamentals that PR is built on. Our classroom discussions will include the pillars of public relations and the future of the field, as well as public relations processes. There will be an emphasis on social media, content creation, stewardship, stakeholder relationships, and leadership. We will also discuss different areas of public relations and application to other fields.

Students will upload all required assignments to eCourseware, and feedback will be given to encourage student improvement. Access to a computer or an electronic device will be required. Please be sure to read the instructions for each assignment carefully, as requirements for each assignment will vary. Assignments being turned into Dropbox will all need to be submitted as a .doc file unless otherwise noted. Reach out in class or via email if anything is unclear to you. All assignments will be due Sunday nights at 11:59 p.m. central time unless otherwise noted. To allow time for response and clarification, please reach out with any assignment questions at least 48 hours prior to the deadline.

In order to succeed in this course, it's imperative to attend class and stay engaged in all coursework. If at any point you are concerned about your grade or struggling to grasp course concepts, I encourage you to make an appointment during my office hours so we can work to find a good solution. Remember that in order for me to help you, communication is key.

Meeman Lab Availability: Open labs 9:30-4:30 Monday-Friday. In addition to Meeman, labs are available in the Tech Hub and the Library.

For students that may not have access to a computer, the McWherter Library has laptops on loan. Please visit the Checkout desk in the library or visit:
<https://www.memphis.edu/libraries/technology/laptop.php>

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Spring 2021 course list available to you, click on the link for PBRL 3441-001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

GRADING AND 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 eCourseware. Deadlines will be listed on each assignment. All work should be

turned in as a Word document via Dropbox in eCourseware unless otherwise noted.

Blog posts (various deadlines), 15%. One of the more established forms of online media among PR professionals are blogs. Blog content is often posted on LinkedIn and repurposed across various other social media platforms. For this semester, you will be creating your own blog posts using the discussion board. You will be asked to write posts relevant to course material, current events related to social media in the industry and other topics as assigned. Blog posts should average 250 – 300 words.

Content creation assignments (various deadlines), 15%. Assignments meant to practice concepts and skills covered in readings and class discussions.

Personal branding assignments (various deadlines), 10%. Assignments meant to help you audit and build your personal brand on social media as a new PR professional.

Social media snapshot (rolling deadlines), 10%. You will each select a social media platform to research and will do a 5 – 8 min. presentation and workshop on the platform to the class.

Final social media content campaign (Monday, Dec. 5), 30%. The final assignment is the course's ultimate application of the principles you've learned. You each will develop a straw-man social media campaign for a local small business or nonprofit that includes developing all of the content for the appropriate social media platforms for the organization.

Quizzes (various deadlines). 15%. There will be weekly quizzes on eCourseware. Quizzes must be completed by Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. (CST).

Participation & attendance, 5%. You are expected to be present and participate in every scheduled class.

Grading

Blog posts	15%
Content creation assignments	15%
Personal branding assignments	10%
Social media snapshot	10%
Final social media content campaign	30%
Quizzes	15%
Participation & attendance	5%

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%

Grading Philosophy. A=Professional quality work that could be use with little or no modification; B=Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement, but would require revision to be used professionally; C=Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement, but would need significant revision; D=Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality; F=Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirement.

Other issues

Contacting me. The best and quickest way to contact me is via email (sdneely@memphis.edu) Do not use the email within eCourseware, use my Memphis.edu email. I will respond to email with 24 – 48 hours. If you have a problem, contact me as soon as possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is tentative and subject to change. Additional details on readings, supplemental materials and assignments will be provided via eCourseware.

Week 1, August 22, 24: Introductions, Introduction to social media

Chapter 1 Introduction to social media: An art and science (Freberg)

Week 2, August 29, 31: Social media ethical & legal considerations

Chapter 2 Ethical and legal fundamentals in social media (Freberg)

Week 3, Sept. 5, 7: Using social media for personal & professional branding

Chapter 3 Personal and professional branding (Freberg)

Week 4, Sept. 12, 14: Research in social media

Chapter 5 Research in social media: Monitoring, listening and analysis (Freberg)

Wednesday, Feb. 10 – Social media snapshot presentation 1

Week 5, Sept. 19, 21: Social Media strategic planning

Chapter 6 Strategic planning for social media (Freberg)

Wednesday, Feb. 17 – Social media snapshot presentation

2

Week 6, Sept. 26, 28: Strategic writing for social media

Chapter 7 Strategic writing for social media (Freberg)

Wednesday, Feb. 24 – Social media snapshot presentation

3

Week 7, Oct. 3, 5: Find your audience on social media

Chapter 8 Audience segmentation and analysis (Freberg)

Wednesday, March 3 – Social media snapshot presentation

4

Week 8, Oct. 10, 12: No class

No class this week

Week 9, Oct. 17, 19: Social media content

Chapter 9 Creating, managing, and curating content (Freberg)

Wednesday, March 17 – Happy St. Patrick's Day + social media snapshot presentation 5

Week 10, Oct. 24, 26: What does success look like on social media?

Chapter 10 Measurement, evaluation, budget and calendar (Freberg)

Wednesday, March 24 – Social media snapshot presentation 6

Week 11, Oct. 31, Nov. 2: The final project

Reading TBD

Wednesday, March 31 – Social media snapshot presentation 7

Week 12, Nov. 7, 9: Writing for Facebook and Instagram

Reading TBD

Week 13, Nov. 14, 16: Writing for LinkedIn and Twitter

Reading TBD

Week 14, Nov. 21, 23: Using Snapchat & TikTok for PR

Reading TBD

Week 15, Nov. 28, 30: Wrap-Up

Note: Last day of class: Tues., November 30

May 3: Final assignment due Mon. Dec. 5, 2022

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Professional Values and Competencies in PBRL 3441

- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

How professional values and competencies will be met

Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)

- Provide a conceptual overview and a systematic study of content creation, curation and

management.

- Understand the importance of considering diversity, accessibility, and inclusiveness when planning social media campaigns and messaging.
- Interpret and apply principles of leadership to the special needs of social media managers and content creators.
- Foster professionalism in social media management, covering the knowledge base, theory, methodologies and ethics.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)

- Select and apply appropriate research and project management tools in support of social media content creation, curation and management.
- Evaluate and critique social media campaigns and content.
- Plan and create content for a social media campaign.
- Work effectively in a group.

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Learn about the important role of social media management and content creation in public relations.

Understanding

- Understand leadership management and the role social media writing and management plays in public relations practice.
- Learn the basics of social media campaign finance and budget management.
- Understand the different audiences found on various social media platforms and how to select an appropriate platform mix for a social media campaign to further an organization's goals.
- Study effective social media campaigns and messaging.

Application

- Network with professionals in public relations and the community.
- Improve written and oral communication skills through written briefs, assessments, and presentations or reports.
- Complete researching, planning, and content creation for a social media campaign during the course of the semester.
- Gain experience creating effective social media messages.
- Learn about personal leadership style and determine areas of potential growth.

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 JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 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 UUIIDs 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

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, they need to notify the Dean of Students Office at deanofstudents@memphis.edu and notify the University of their result. Faculty are expected to be accommodating with extra time for assignments; however, decisions will vary on a case-by-case basis according to the severity of the student's illness. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, students are encouraged to wear masks indoors, wash hands frequently and wipe down their workstations with sanitizing wipes before and after class.