

## Strategic Writing for Social Media

PBRL 3441-M50

Spring 2023

**Prof. Kim Marks Malone, APR, Fellow PRSA**

**Office:** 334A Meeman Journalism Building

**Office Hours:** M/W 10 – 11 a.m. and 12:30 – 2 p.m.; T 12 – 2:30 p.m.; other hours in-person & online 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* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Freberg, K. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-0718-2690-4.
- Other readings and supplemental materials will be assigned and posted to Canvas.
- Access to personal social media accounts – may be newly created for this class but you will lack analytics to help with some assignments.

#### Classroom format

This course is delivered online in an asynchronous format. In other words, we have no scheduled meeting time. This can be convenient for you, but it also means that it is essential for you to be an organized, motivated student.

You must have internet access and Microsoft Word or other word processing software that generates a “.doc” or “.docx” extension. All assignments MUST be filed in a “.doc” or “.docx” format; type must be double-spaced with indented paragraphs.

I must be able to open your work and review it using track changes to grade it. Work submitted in a software package not noted as acceptable may result in point deductions

#### Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis online learning home page:  
<https://memphis.instructure.com>

2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. On your course dashboard, click on the course card for PBRL 3441.M50

## 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 Canvas. Deadlines will be listed on each assignment. All work should be turned in as a Word document on Canvas 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.

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

**Personal branding assignments (various deadlines), 15%.** Assignments meant to help you audit and build your personal brand on social media as a new PR professional.

**Social media snapshot (rolling deadlines), 15%.** You will each select a social media platform to research and will do a 5 – 8 min. recorded video presentation on the platform to the class. Details are provided on Canvas.

**Social Media Strategic Plan, 25%.** The final project is the course’s ultimate application of the principles you’ve learned. In teams of five people, you will create a social media strategic plan for a local small business or nonprofit that includes developing content for the appropriate social media platforms for the organization. This plan will have several components to it, including a slide deck presentation, a written report and peer evaluations for your group members. Details will be provided on Canvas.

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

### Grading

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Blog posts                                      | 15% |
| • Assignments                                     | 10% |
| • Personal branding assignments                   | 20% |
| • Social media snapshot                           | 15% |
| • Social Media Strategic Plan                     | 20% |
| • Individual Grade on Social Media Strategic Plan | 5%  |
| • Quizzes   | 15% |

A = 90- 100; B = 80 – 89.9; C = 70 – 79.9; D = 60 – 69.9; F = below 60

**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 ([ksmarks@memphis.edu](mailto: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.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is tentative and subject to change. Additional details on readings, supplemental materials and assignments will be provided via Canvas. *All required readings/assignments for each week may not be listed here. Always defer to Canvas for the most up-to-date list of readings & assignments for the week.*

### Part 1: Foundations for Creating a Strategic Mindset

*Week 1, Jan. 17 – 22: Introduction to social media (note: first day of classes is Tuesday, Jan. 17)*

Read/Watch:

- Chapter 1 Introduction to social media: An art and science (Freberg)
- Chapter 5 Industry qualifications and roles in social media (Freberg)
- How to Write a Blog Post (Canvas)
- Social media is becoming less ‘social’ and more ‘media’ (Canvas)
- Digital 2022 Global Report: Top 10 Takeaways (Canvas)

Assignments:

- Introduction discussion post (due Jan. 22)
- Self-awareness of social media (due on Wed, Jan. 25)
- Pick your platform for social media snapshot assignment (ASAP – first come, first served)
- Social media snapshot (rolling deadlines based on the platform you selected)
- Quiz 1 (due Jan. 22)

*Week 2, Jan. 23 – 29: Ethical & legal considerations and DE&I*

Read/Watch:

- Chapter 2 Ethical and legal fundamentals in social media (Freberg)
- Chapter 4 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in social media (Freberg)
- Why ethics matter for social media, Silicon Valley & every tech industry leader (Canvas)
- PRSA ethics & social media position paper (Canvas)
- 🗣️ Hayley Paige vs JLM Couture (8:38) (Canvas)
- 🗣️ The Reality of Fighting Influencer Fraud (23:50) (Canvas)
- 5 ways to develop a long-term strategy for DE&I on social media (Canvas)
- Diversity & content marketing: How brands can be more inclusive (Canvas)
- Diversity style guide (Canvas)
- 🗣️ Ep. 291 – Diversity Inclusion: How to make your social media content accessible with Alexa

Heinrich (27:20) (Canvas)

Assignments:

- DUE: Self-awareness of social media assignment (due on Wed, Jan. 25)
- Quiz 2 (due Jan. 29)
- Blog post: Why brands & organizations need to pay attention to cancel culture (due Jan. 29)

### *Week 3, Jan. 30 – Feb. 5: Using social media for personal & professional branding*

Read/Watch:

- Chapter 3 Personal and professional branding for social media (Freberg)
- 🎥 How to build or rebuild your personal brand (17:42) (Canvas)
- 🎥 Building a powerful personal brand in 2022 (12:21) (Canvas)

Assignments:

- Quiz 3 (due Feb. 5)
- Blog post: What's your personal brand – and is it where you want it to be? (due Feb. 5)
- DUE: Facebook & Instagram Social Media Snapshot Presentations

### *Week 4, Feb. 6 – 12: Research in social media*

Read/Watch:

- Chapter 6 Strategic planning for social media (Freberg)
- 🎥 Monitoring and Listening on Social Media (7:05) (Canvas)
- 🎥 17 Social Media Metrics to Track (8:30) (Canvas)

Assignments:

- Quiz 4 (due Feb. 12)
- Blog post: Why is social media monitoring and listening important in 2023? (due Feb. 12)
- Using research to build your personal brand (due Feb. 19)
- DUE: TikTok & Snapshot Social Media Snapshot Presentations
- DUE: Facebook & Instagram Social Media Snapshot Reflections

## ***Part 2: Understanding social media strategy***

### *Week 5, Feb. 13 – 19: Strategic planning for social media*

Read:

- Chapter 7 Strategic planning for social media (Freberg)

Assignments:

- Quiz 5 (due Feb. 19)
- Using research to inform your actions: Building your personal social strategy (due March 5)
- Blog post: Topic TBD (due Feb. 19)
- Social Media Strategic Plan (various deadlines)
  - Self-select teams of five for Social Media Strategic Plan – due as discussion post (Feb. 19) *Note: If you do not self-select to teams, I will assign teams randomly.*
- DUE: Twitter & LinkedIn Social Media Snapshot Presentations
- DUE: TikTok & Snapchat Social Media Snapshot Reflections

### *Week 6, Feb. 20 – 26: Strategic writing for social media*

Read:

- Chapter 10 Strategic writing for social media (Freberg)

Assignments:

- Quiz 6 (due Feb. 26)
- Blog post: Topic TBD (due Feb. 26)
- DUE: Twitter Spaces & Pinterest Social Media Snapshot Presentations
- DUE: Twitter & LinkedIn Social Media Snapshot Reflections

*Week 7, Feb. 27 – March 5: Find your audience on social media*

Read:

- Chapter 11 Audience segmentation and analysis (Freberg)

Assignments:

- Quiz 7 (due March 5)
- DUE: Using research to inform your actions: Building your personal social strategy
- DUE: YouTube & Reddit Social Media Snapshot Presentations
- Due: Twitter Spaces & Pinterest Social Media Snapshot Reflections

*Note: No blog post due this week*

*Week 8, March 6 – 12: No class*

No class this week

*Week 9, March 13 – 19: Social media content*

Read:

- Chapter 12 Creating, managing, and curating content (Freberg)

Assignments:

- Quiz 8 (due March 19)
- Blog post: Topic TBD (due March 19)
- DUE: Discord & Twitch Social Media Snapshot Presentations
- DUE: YouTube & Reddit Social Media Snapshot Reflections

*Week 10, March 20 – 26: What does success look like on social media?*

*(IMPLEMENT your personal brand social media strategy)*

**! Monday, March 20 – Thursday, April 20 – Implement your personal brand social media strategy !**

Read:

- Chapter 13 Measurement, evaluation, budget and calendar considerations for social media (Freberg)

Assignments:

- Quiz 9 (due March 26)
- Blog post: Topic TBD (Due March 26)
- DUE: Medium & Instagram Reels Social Media Snapshot Presentations
- DUE: Discord & Twitch Social Media Snapshot Reflections

*Note: I will be reviewing/grading the content that you post as part of your personal brand social media campaign.*

### ***Part 3: Creating content for specific platforms***

#### ***Week 11, March 27 – April 2: Writing for Facebook & Instagram***

***Continue implementing personal brand social media strategy***

Reading TBD

Assignments:

- Blog post: Topic TBD (due April 2)
- DUE: Mastodon & Clubhouse Social Media Snapshot Presentations
- DUE: Medium & Instagram Reels Social Media Snapshot Reflections

*Note: I will be reviewing/grading the content that you post as part of your personal brand social media campaign.*

#### ***Week 12, April 3 – 9: Writing for LinkedIn and Twitter***

***Continue implementing personal brand social media strategy***

Reading TBD

Assignments:

- Blog post: Topic TBD (Due April 9)
- DUE: Tumblr & WhatsApp Social Media Snapshot Presentations
- DUE: Mastodon & Clubhouse Social Media Snapshot Reflections

*Note: I will be reviewing/grading the content that you post as part of your personal brand social media campaign.*

#### ***Week 13, April 10 – 16: Using Snapchat & TikTok for PR***

***Continue implementing personal brand social media strategy***

Reading TBD

Assignments:

- Blog post: Topic TBD (Due April 16)
- DUE: Google My Business & BeReal Social Media Snapshot Presentations
- DUE: Tumblr & WhatsApp Social Media Snapshot Reflections

*Note: I will be reviewing/grading the content that you post as part of your personal brand social media campaign.*

#### ***Week 14, April 17 – 23: Work Week***

***Personal brand social media campaign ends Thursday, April 20. Download analytics for last 30 days on Friday, April 21.***

Assignments:

- DUE: Google My Business & BeReal Social Media Snapshot Reflections

*Note: I will be reviewing/grading the content that you post as part of your personal brand social media campaign.*

#### ***Week 15, April 24 – 26: Wrap-Up***

Note: Last day of classes is Wednesday, April 26

Assignments:

- DUE: Analytics report and findings for personal brand social media campaign (**Wed., April 26**)

## 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

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, 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
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to



the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### **Email**

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

### **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 & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

### **Course repetition**

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You 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. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

### **Academic integrity**

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and 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, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws 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 and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). 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.

## **Online SETEs**

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; 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 seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

## **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. 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.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

## **AP Style and grammar**

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

## **Disability and accommodations**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

## **Diversity and inclusivity**

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

## **Weather policy**

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website and the LiveSafe App regarding inclement weather.

## **Student support**

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.