

**J329, Writing for Public Relations/MWF 11 a.m.-11:50 p.m.,  
Journalism Building 205 Texas A&M University-Commerce**

**Spring, 2017 Instructor: Dr. John Mark Dempsey**

**Performing Arts Center 130**

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**Catalog description:** "The preparation of and the writing of various documents in the field of public relations with both lecture and laboratory sessions. Emphasis is upon writing and research for public relations formats. Prerequisite: Jour 328 or consent of the instructor."

**Objectives of the course:** (1) to learn to write with correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and syntax; (2) to learn to write with clarity and logical organization in several formats suitable for public relations; (3) to improve one's ability to find and to use reliable sources of information and data for public relations "copy"; (4) to learn to interview skillfully and to use attribution of materials.

**Textbook:** *Associated Press Stylebook, 2015* or later. Recommended, a grammar and style book such as "When Words Collide" (Kessler & McDonald) or "The Elements of Style" (Strunk & White).

**Supplies needed:** Flash drive to save your assignments.

**Outside assignments:** any outside reading assignments or materials deemed necessary for this class will be placed on reserve in Gee Library. Or, if available, online sources may be utilized.

**Class attendance policy:** Class attendance is mandatory, and absences will be recorded. This is a writing class, and missed classes will result in missed assignments; missed assignments are not acceptable nor are they acceptable in the professional world. The University policy on attendance is stated in the Catalog. Read it online.

Upon the fourth unexcused absence, Dr. Dempsey reserves the right to drop you from the course.

Students also are expected to be in class on time.

**Plagiarism:** I will distribute a copy of a statement about plagiarism. Your signed acknowledgment is kept on file and remains in effect. Please note that I consider academic dishonesty of any form a serious offense and one that must be dealt with by the instructor and the University. If there is a question about this topic or enforcement, please see me.

**Content requirements:** Please note these statements regarding your work for Journalism 329. It is your responsibility to follow these guidelines. These requirements supersede ANY stipulations you may have encountered in any other class, work for *The East Texan* or any other outlet or how another instructor may have told you to prepare text.

- (1) Do not offer excuses for lack of preparation, work, or submission of work in J329.
- (2) Prepare all assignments on a word processor and always check or "proofread" your copy for errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and syntax. When you have done so, place your signature at the end of the copy. This says to the instructor that you have reviewed and checked your work. It says you have verified your work and stand by it -- for good or for bad.
- (3) Submit clean copy on one side of the sheet - unless otherwise directed - and use white paper -- unless otherwise directed.
- (4) Use standard fonts, not "fancy" ones, and use font sizes of about 12 or 14 points for most copy. Standard fonts to the instructor would include Palatino, Times, Bookman, New York, Garamond -- and so on. Do not write copy with italics, do not use boldface, and do not underline unless asked. Use a standard line length. Do not write a title (headline) on copy unless asked to do so.
- (5) Save a copy of all assignments. You will keep a portfolio of your work on your flash drive.
- (6) Be sure you do your own work. You will learn to write not by trying to "follow" a prescribed, rigid wording from a book but by shaping copy that has meaning and a clear use of the language.
- (7) Remember what you learned writing for The East Texan, but keep in mind that just because that publication wishes to "do something" one way does not mean J329 will require the same approaches.
- (8) One requirement is essential: proper attribution. Individuals grant interviews and data to writers because they are knowledgeable.

**Instructor's marks:** I will read copy first for content. Then, I will "put a pencil" to your work. If that work is unsatisfactory upon an initial reading, the work will be returned to you with a partial grade (50 or lower based on points for assignment) for a rewrite. If the rewrite is not acceptable, the document will be returned to you with the original grade. The highest grade for a rewritten assignment is 80.

Copy returned to you will/may have these marks. (Others may be added during the semester.)

“SP” = indicates a spelling error.

“GR” = indicates an error in grammar and/or punctuation.

A mark that resembles an “L” before a line indicates you should make a new paragraph (this is a common correction)

“STOP” = means tired of reading this "bad copy".

“Syntax” - means reconsider the arrangement of the words, parts of speech.

Points will be deducted for errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation.

Watch out for confusion between the plural and the possessive, for sentence fragments (always think subject, verb, and object), and for agreement between subject and verb (in number, singular, plural).

**Grading:** your final course evaluation will be based upon:

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Two examinations    | 200 points (100 each)                  |
| Writing assignments | 500 points (In-class and out-of-class) |
| Project             | 200 points (TBD)                       |
| Attendance          | <u>100 points</u>                      |

(Attendance: 100 pts., 0-1 unexcused absences; 90 pts., 2 unexcused absences; 80 pts., 3 unexcused absences; 4 unexcused absences, 70 pts; no points for more than four unexcused absences)

1000 points

900-1000 points = A

800-899 points = B

700-799 points = C

600-699 points = D

<600 points = F

Assignments will be announced week-to-week.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes in this syllabus as he deems necessary. Students will be informed of any changes.

**Read carefully the following statements!**

“All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (See current Student Guidebook).”

“Nondiscrimination notice: A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.”

“Students with Disabilities information: The American Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, Gee Library, Room 132 (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 phone (903) 468-8148 fax, Email [Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu](mailto:Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu).”

“Campus-Concealed Carry statement: Campus Concealed Carry – Texas Senate Bill – 11 authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) a46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUS/policiesProceduresStandards/Statements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyofEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.”