COURSE SYLLABUS
Applied Media Communication Skills
1161-MMC6412

GENERAL INFORMATION

PROFESSOR INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Prof. Jessica Matias</th>
<th>Phone:</th>
<th>(305) 846-1814</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>Please use Blackboard course messages or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jematias@fiu.edu">jematias@fiu.edu</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

MMC 6412 Applied Media Skills is a graduate course covering the advanced concepts of writing for public relations and marketing communications in the digital marketplace. The goal of this course is to help students develop professional-quality writing skills for communicating strategically and effectively in multiple formats and platforms. Upon the successful completion of the course, students will have a professional portfolio of writing samples.

Topics explored in this course include contemporary use of news releases, social media, and online communication. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to write appropriate and compelling copy for a wide range of online media venues, understand how to integrate media strategies and tactics across multiple media outlets, and to develop professional writing samples for each media platform. Student assessments include discussion forums, critiques, peer reviews, writing projects, and the development of a final, polished portfolio of writing samples.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students should be better able to:

1. Identify effective online communication techniques and practices.
2. Recognize writing strategies that work best across various media and audiences.
3. Describe varied writing styles and writing techniques for any given public relations or marketing communication venue.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of writing across a variety of media in their writing and provide positive criticism of peer-written drafts.
5. Explain the rationale for communications strategies and media venues most appropriate for any given audience and/or product/service.
6. Define common media, public relations, and online marketing terms.
MAJOR & CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES TARGETED

The following are ACEJMC Student Learning Outcomes that are targeted in this course:

Students must demonstrate through engaged discussion, critiques and peer reviews the understanding of the following:

1. Common definitions of online marketing, public relations, and media terms.
2. Application of the appropriate strategy and tactics in using traditional and online media.
3. Ability to provide creative, positive feedback and analysis to fellow students on written assignments, online discussions, and supplemental reading and online materials.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

This is a fully online course in which all of the instructional materials and activities are delivered through Blackboard, and/or other internet-based media. There are no exams in this class, only assignments and a final project due at the end of the semester.

ASSURANCE OF LEARNING

The School of Journalism & Mass Communication cares about the quality of your education. That's why we participate in Quality Matters, a quality assurance program dedicated to continual improvement of online courses. Quality Matters is a faculty-centered peer review process that evaluates and certifies the quality of our online courses. For more information, go to Quality Matters.

SJMC DIVERSITY

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) fosters an environment of inclusivity and respect for diversity and multiculturalism. The SJMC educates students to embrace diversity and understand the root causes of discrimination, as well as social, ethnic, sexual, disability and gender-based exclusion.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

POLICIES

Please review FIU's Policies webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

INCOMPLETES

Incompletes will be granted only under circumstances where a student experiences a major unanticipated event disrupting his/her studies, after satisfactorily completing at least half the term. A student requesting an incomplete must present a written explanation detailing the circumstances necessitating the request. If the incomplete is granted, the instructor will write or email the student stating the specific requirements for completion and the
time frame in which the student is expected to complete them. Incompletes are not given to students as a way to avoid receiving a failing grade.

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS/SKILLS**

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning to use your computer’s operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the [What’s Required](#) page to find out more information on this subject.

This course utilizes the following tools:

1. Minimum Home Computer Requirements
2. Internet access – Online Blackboard
3. Microsoft Office with PowerPoint and Word
4. Access to Adobe Connect
5. Skype account for one-on-one meetings with Professor Matias.
6. FIU online courses tend to work better with Internet Explorer.

Please visit our [Technical Requirements](#) webpage for additional information.

**ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION**

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Please visit [Blackboard’s Commitment to Accessibility](#) webpage for more information.

For additional assistance please contact [FIU’s Disability Resource Center](#).

**COURSE PREREQUISITES**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**TEXTBOOK**
IMPORTANT: Please be sure to have access to an AP Style Manual or resource guide, as all writing assignments must follow AP format.

EXPECTATIONS OF THIS COURSE

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online.

Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for traditional courses; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Online courses are not independent study courses. You will be expected to interact online with the professor and your fellow students; to complete assignments; to meet deadlines; and to work in virtual groups.

Students are expected to:
1. Review the how to get started information located in the course content
2. Introduce yourself to the class the first week of class by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
3. Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard
4. Interact online with instructor/s and peers
5. Review and follow the course calendar
6. Log in to the course at least three times per week
7. Submit assignments by the corresponding deadline
8. Respond to discussion boards/postings at least once a week with contributed material, questions, and comment.

General Advice:
1. Students should have a thorough understanding of English grammar, usage, and punctuation. More than three typos in any submitted assignment will be lowered by one whole letter grade.
2. Students will need basic computer skills, including accessing online resources, participation in online course discussions, and the use of Microsoft Word.

The instructor will:
1. Log in to the course three times a week
2. Respond to emails within 24 hours
3. Grade assignments within 1 week of the assignment deadline.

COURSE DETAILS

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication in this course will take place via Messages (on Blackboard) or email (jematias@fiu.edu), and Skype.

If you have questions that would be useful for all students, you can also post them on the discussion boards (according to topic or module) so that everyone can benefit from the responses. The discussion forum will be used for class discussions and other postings of general interest related to the course. Everyone can read the discussion forum postings; therefore, do not post private information. Please note that I'm always happy to communicate with students about any issue or topic. If you do not hear back from me within 24 hours, please e-mail me again to make sure I saw your original message.

Visit our Writing Resources webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND PARTICIPATION

The course is designed for active participation. The discussion forums can be used to discuss any questions, comments and observations that students want to make related to the weekly topic facilitated by other students or the professor. You are expected to learn from each other as much as from the readings and the professor. Many of your assignments will be shared and critiqued by your peers. The week after assignments are due will be devoted to peer critique and discussion. Each student is expected to participate in meaningful discussions throughout the semester that indicate knowledge of the course material.

DISCUSSION FORUMS

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

In addition to weekly writing assignments, students will have several mandatory discussion forums:

1. **Peer Reviews**: students will be reviewing the works of fellow peers providing thoughtful and constructive feedback. Students will pick the work of a different student every week and comment on at least one draft.

2. **Critiques**: students will be provided a few writing samples from which they will select one and draft a critique.
3. **Discussion Questions:** students will be post one question and one response – engaging with at least one peer throughout the week is required.

**Weekly Discussion Forums:** Every week/module will have a designated topic and/or designated prompt posted by the professor or a student. These will not be graded individually; however will be considered as a collective worth 25% of your final grade.

**Late responses will not count.**

It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum [hardware requirements](#).

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

### WRITING ASSIGNMENTS & FINAL PORTFOLIO

Development of a professional portfolio of four (4) communication writing samples, will include:

1. One news/press release (1 page).
2. Three related blog posts (2-3 pages total).
3. Email campaign (2-3 pages).
4. Case study or white paper (5-8 pages).

**The total number of pages in the final portfolio will be no less than 10 but no more than 15 pages in length.**

Students will submit drafts for both professor and peer review with the goal of improving the style, effectiveness, and specific strategic goals of each communication venue.

Drafts will receive an initial grade upon first review.

Rewrites of initial written assignments will be incorporated into a graded final portfolio.

*Please see COURSE SCHEDULE for due dates.*

**Notes for Writing Assignments:**

- All assignments are individual assignments, no group projects.
- All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard in the ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX – no emailed assignments will be accepted. Please plan accordingly as technical difficulties may arise and you will need time to resolve the matter with tech support prior to the assignment deadline.
- Written assignments should all demonstrate the following:
  - The appropriate style, format, and content type for the individual form (email campaign, news release, etc.) according to assignment details/rubric provided for each in the ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX.
  - The recommended page/word count for each assignment.
• Participation in online forum discussions of peer-submitted drafts is mandatory, and will impact your grade for that assignment.

• The expected turn-around time for feedback and/or grades from the professor for each written assignment is one week after submission.

• Students will have one-on-one meetings with the professor via SKYPE – please see COURSE SCHEDULE for details.

**Final Portfolio Expectations:**

The Final Portfolio is a polished and complete set of work based on all four writing assignments from the semester. Each written assignment will go through two rounds of drafts:

1. Initial draft (graded)
2. Final draft that incorporates professor and peer comments (graded)

The final portfolio will be graded as your final project for the course. No late portfolios will be accepted.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Weights</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Writing Assignment: Press/New Release</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Writing Assignment: Blog Post</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Writing Assignment: Email Campaign</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writing Assignment: White Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. DISCUSSION FORUMS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Reviews</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critiques</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Final Writing Portfolio</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>% Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Above 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 – 86.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 83.99</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65 – 69.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;65</td>
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## COURSE CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE/DATES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MODULE 1</td>
<td>COURSE INTRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/11- 1/17</td>
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**To-Do List:**

- **Thoroughly read** the SYLLABUS and address any questions you may have with the professor.

- **Purchase Book:** Please be sure to have your books by **week 2** if you haven’t done so already as it is required for the course.

### Discussion Forum:

- **Introduce Yourself** 😊 Please take the time to introduce yourselves in the discussion forum by Sunday 1/17.

- **Organizational Persona:** Students will create a “fictitious” company or organization that a student will use as a basis for writing assignments throughout the course and which will be incorporated in the final portfolio. The “organizational persona” should be fictional, but the students should tie it to an interest, skill, or job that they have. For example, if the student had a job at a retail department store, he or she should create a fictional company in that industry as the “organizational persona.”

  Post details of your “organizational persona” to be used for all written assignments by Sunday 1/17 at 11:59PM in the discussion forum – “ORGANIZATIONAL PERSONA.” This is not a graded assignment, however mandatory and necessary for all writing assignments to be completed.

### Readings:

- Chapter 1: The Old Rules of Marketing & PR
- Chapter 2: The New Rules of Marketing & PR
- Chapter 10: You Are What you Publish

*Supports Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 6*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE/DATES</th>
<th>TOPIC: NEWS RELEASES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MODULE 2 1/18- 1/24</td>
<td>To-Do List:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion Forum:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion Question: students will post one question regarding this week’s reading by Thursday and one response by Sunday.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 19: How to Use News Releases to Reach Buyers Directly</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chapter 20: Your Newsroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 21: The New Rules for Reaching the Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: News Release due to Professor and peer review by 1/24 at 11:59PM. See Blackboard Assignment Dropbox for assignment details.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Supports Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 5, 6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE 3 1/25- 1/31</th>
<th>TOPIC: BLOGS &amp; EMAILS</th>
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<td>To-Do List:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion Forum:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Review – New Release (due by Sunday)</td>
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<td>Discussion Question: students will post one question regarding this week’s reading by Thursday and one response by Sunday.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Readings:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 5: Blogs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 16: Blogging to Reach Your Buyers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Blog Posts and Email Campaign due to professor and peer review by 2/7 at 11:59PM. See Blackboard Assignment Dropbox for assignment details.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Supports Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6</td>
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<p>| MODULE 4 | TOPIC: BLOGS &amp; EMAILS |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE/DATES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2/1 – 2/7  | **To-Do List:**  
**Discussion Forum:**  
➔ Critique: TBA  
➔ **Discussion Question:** students will post one question regarding this week’s reading by Thursday and one response by Sunday.  

**Readings:**  
Chapter 12: Online Thought Leadership to Brand Your Organization as a Trusted Resource  

**Assignment:** Blog Posts and Email Campaign due to professor and peer review by 2/7 at 11:59PM. See Blackboard Assignment Dropbox for assignment details.  

*Supports Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 6*

| MODULE 5  | TOPIC: WHITE PAPERS  
**To-Do List:**  

**Discussion Forum:**  
➔ Peer Review – Blog Posts & Email Campaign (due by Sunday)  

**Readings:**  
Chapter 15: Social Networking as Marketing  
See supplemental readings on BlackBoard.  

**Assignment:** White Paper due to professor and peer review by 2/21 at 11:59PM. See Blackboard Assignment Dropbox for assignment details.  

*Supports Learning Objectives: 3, 4, 6*

<p>| MODULE 6  | <strong>To-Do List:</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE/DATES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 2/15 – 2/21  | **Discussion Forum:** No scheduled discussion, continue working on White Papers  
**Readings:** No scheduled reading.  
**Assignment:** White Paper due to professor and peer review by 2/21 at 11:59PM. See Blackboard Assignment Dropbox for assignment details.  
*Supports Learning Objectives: 3, 6* |
| MODULE 7 2/22 – 2/28 | **TOPIC:** WRITING FOR THE WEB  
*To-Do List:*  
**Discussion Forum:**  
→ **Peer Review** – White Paper (due by Sunday)  
**Readings:** No scheduled reading.  
**Assignment:** WORK ON PORTFOLIOS  
*Supports Learning Objectives: 3, 4, 6* |
| MODULE 8 2/29 – 3/5 | **FINAL PORTFOLIOS DUE FRIDAY MARCH 4 BY 11:59PM.**  
*Supports Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3* |