

Elizabethtown College
Department of Communications
Course Syllabus

Com 485A&B - Communications Seminar
4 Credits
Spring 2010
Prerequisites - Senior Majors

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Dr. Kirsten Johnson (206E-1258)
11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Course Description and Purpose

Communications Seminar is the final, or capstone, course required of all majors. It is intended to provide an opportunity for an integration of course work, knowledge, skills, and experiential learning to enable the student to demonstrate a broad mastery of professional expectations for a promise of initial employability, further learning, and career advancement. The course employs critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving strategies, effective writing, effective oral communication, quantitative and qualitative analysis, computer literacy, library competency and mediated communications, related to a student's communications concentration and specific career plans.

Course Outcomes The student will be able to:

1. Clearly define the characteristics, skills and abilities necessary for their chosen career area.
2. Formulate a statement and rationale for preferred employment in Communications.
3. Prepare a résumé and portfolio for employment and prepare for employment interviews.
4. Work independently and develop a keen sense of time management and project management.
5. Enhance skills in written, spoken and audio/visual communications.
6. Evaluate and process learning, find similarities, draw distinctions, synthesize concepts, and create new ideas through the selection, research, production, presentation, and defense of a senior project.
7. Develop a professional identity exemplifying knowledge, skills, values and attitudes appropriate to their career path through an experiential learning opportunity.
8. Develop an informed sense of design & production and use a variety of forms of mediated communication effectively.

Resource Materials

1. Weidenborner, S., Caruso, D., & Parks, G. (2005). *Writing research papers: A guide to the process* (7th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
2. American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, DC: APA.
3. Department and college periodicals available in the library and department resource room.
4. Interlibrary loan of books and periodicals.
5. Computer searches of a variety of databases. See reference librarian for questions. Especially consider the use of Communication & Mass Media Complete, Academic Search Premier, Business Source Elite, and Social Science Abstracts.
6. Library resources are available from off-campus computers. From the Library website, use your regular ID and password and click on "Off-Campus Etown Users."
7. IABC Gold Quill Case Studies located in the department library. Project descriptions.
8. Class (computer-storage) Directories

Academic Integrity All students are to conform to all provisions of the Academic Integrity Policy of Elizabethtown College. All work submitted is expected to be that of the individual student and that all representations in it conform to proper guidelines of honesty. Consult the guidelines in Academic Integrity at Elizabethtown College for procedures and consequences.

Student Disabilities If you have a documented disability and need reasonable accommodations to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements, you must:

- 1.) Contact the Director of Disability Services, Dr. Kristin Sagun, in the Center for Student Success, BSC room 228 by calling 361-1227.
- 2.) Meet with me (the instructor) within two weeks of receiving a copy of the accommodation letter from Disability Services to discuss your accommodation needs and their implementation.

Documentation Standards APA Style is the only acceptable standard for citing references and quotations/sources. All sources must be documented including personal communication.

Attendance It is expected that all students attend every class and be on time. Absences severely handicap the learning process because you are unable to acquire knowledge through firsthand discussions and demonstrations. Being late for class interrupts the momentum of the class and distracts other students. Class material will not be reviewed for those absent.

A student may miss two class sessions without penalty. However, on each successive absence, a grade reduction will be made from the course final grade. Work missed as a result of an absence will only be made up by PRIOR arrangement with the instructor. Unless approved by the instructor, late work will earn a score of 0 or F.

Absences beyond two will be permitted only for students participating in intercollegiate athletics. Work must be submitted in advance of the absence. No extension will be given for work due. It is possible that on certain days (or regarding certain projects) an absence may not be acceptable. Excessive absences for athletics may cause the instructor to not permit further absences. In any case, once two absences have occurred, the only permissible absence, without penalty, is for athletics, severe illness with a doctor's excuse, or a death in the immediate family with documentation.

Expectations Success in this course is predicated on the following:

- Students have been introduced and exposed to research writing and the research process through FYS, required composition courses (Power of Language) and WRI college core courses.
- Students whose writing does not meet academic expectations will remediate work through the Writing Center and other campus resources. COM 485 instructors do not edit student work.
- Plagiarism **in any form** will not be tolerated and will result in a failing assignment grade; this may be grounds for expulsion from the course as defined by the College Catalog (p. 283-4, 2009-10).

Conflict of Interest Clients chosen by the students for the projects must not have a personal connection to the student or their family. This constitutes a conflict of interest (unethical behavior) and will result in removal from the course. For example, clients may not be members of the student's family or family friends.

Client Evaluation and Commitment Letters At the beginning of the semester and the end of the semester, the client will communicate directly with the course instructor regarding commitment to the project and final evaluation of the project. These letters must come directly from the client to the instructor (not the student) and must be on official company/organization letterhead with an original signature. Email documents will not be acceptable. This is considered confidential communication between the client and the course instructor.

Miscellaneous

1. ALL WORK MUST BE NEATLY TYPED. Consider yourself a professional and prepare your materials as such. All written submission must be double-spaced, 12 point type, Times or Times Roman

font, one inch margins on all edges, and proper folios for page numbering using APA style. Incorrect spelling, grammar, typographical errors and written-in corrections are not acceptable and will detract from the grade.

2. All work must be submitted on time (defined as the beginning of the class period on the day due.) Late submission without the prior consent of the instructor will earn a grade of 0 or F.
3. All oral presentations in the course are formal presentations demonstrating excellent oral skills, presentation skills, and accompanying professional visual aids. Only keyword note cards are permitted, no manuscripts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. PROJECT MANAGEMENT Shortly after the semester begins, each student will select an approved senior project. During the course of the semester, outlines and updates for the project will be due. These will be formally written and typed documents, turned in to the instructor. These documents will be graded P (Pass) or NP (No Pass).

THESE DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE KEPT IN ONE BINDER, NOT ONLY FOR FURTHER REFERENCE BY THE STUDENT BUT ALSO FOR SUBMISSION OF ALL ACCUMULATED DOCUMENTS WITH EACH NEW PROGRESS REPORT AND WITH THE FINAL PAPER. This ring binder is to use labeled dividers organized as specified below. Originals must accompany resubmissions. Each submission must be dated. Organize submissions in reverse chronological order. Do not place items in plastic pages. All items (except the research plan and journal) must be initialed by the client.

Periodically, during the semester reports are made regarding the status of the client projects. These reports are written (TYPED) and include the following: 1) Senior Project Proposal, 2) Research Plan, 3) A progress (status) report of the project, 4) journal, 5) media audit, 6) Media Production Proposal (Treatment), 7) project time lines, 8) budget, and 9) production elements (storyboards, scripts, thumbnails). The journal is a daily record of work and activities for the project (only) including reflective and evaluative comments from client meetings (specifying details of client discussions and decisions). For each binder submission, the final journal entry is a summary report of progress. Timelines are organized into pre-production, production, and post-production specific (not general) activity sections. Columns indicate: expected date of completion, revised date of completion (as needed,) and date completed. Timelines are regularly revised for each submission. All items are revised as needed and revisions are submitted with originals in reverse chronological order.

The **first progress report requires** a special section reviewing your “swipe file” or Media Audit of current and relevant practices and samples, Media Production Proposal, Timeline and Budget. The **second report requires** a comprehensive update of the project progress. In both instances, an analysis of findings or conclusions drawn from these activities is needed.

2. ORAL PRESENTATION Each student will present one (1) oral report during the course of the semester concerning an issue from his/her review of literature specifically related to the senior project. The report is to be a product of research from a well-balanced selection of sources within the last ten years. The oral presentation is 5-8 minutes (max.) long. The presentation is not a progress report on the senior project. One note card will be permitted -- keywords only.
3. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY A formally planned and prepared résumé will be developed by each student. The instructor will evaluate the resume as if it were being submitted for a job interview.
4. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY Each student, based upon personal strengths and expertise, as indicated in the résumé, will prepare a comprehensive professional portfolio of communications skills and abilities. The instructor will evaluate the portfolio as if it were being submitted for a job interview.

5. CHAPTERS 1 AND 2: CLIENT INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE SEARCH (MID-TERM) The formal research undertaken to formulate a foundation for the project (a literature review of approximately 20 pages) is due as a mid-term paper. This paper constitutes an initial draft of Chapter 1 and 2 of the final paper. Thesis sentence is underlined in all uses. The research question for the project must also be identified.
6. SENIOR THESIS, CLIENT PROJECT AND ORAL DEFENSE The final project is a formal client project arranged with a particular business, corporation, agency, etc. Contacts and selection of a client, as well as topic, is the responsibility of the student. However, both the client and instructor must approve the project. Secure a copy of a letter outlining project requirements from the client, which must be submitted to the instructor with the proposal. An introductory letter from the instructor should be provided to all potential clients. The letter can be retrieved from the instructor's public folder.

This final requirement is made up of three parts. First, the student undertakes major research on the theory and foundations of such a project. Second, based on the research, the student writes, designs, creates, etc., the actual project and/or program for the client. Thirdly, the student presents an oral defense of the research and project.

THE THESIS. The student will submit a formal written thesis. The paper consists of six parts:

- 1) an introduction and description of the client and project;
- 2) the formal research undertaken to formulate a foundation for the project;
- 3) an analysis and description, of the pre-planning of the project, as it relates to Chapter 2. It is the PR plan, ad plan, or production plan that references the Media Audit/Content Analysis and specifically addresses the project goal and each objective;
- 4) discussion of project design, creation, and production; how and why the project (product) and its components were properly produced in order to specifically achieve the goal and each objective of the project (this chapter does not deal at all technical elements of equipment, crew positions or other scheduling requirements);
- 5) evaluation and summary/conclusion. Chapter 5 must address formative evaluation (procedures and results) and summative evaluation (short-term procedures and results.) Long-term summative evaluation is also to be addressed. Focus groups must be held as part of evaluation. In the summary, the student must note summative evaluation procedures and data, areas of improvement, strengths and weaknesses of the project. In the conclusion, evaluate the experience, class-client relationship, etc.
- 6) Appendix: The project management binder constitutes this section (which must also contain the mid-term Chapter 1-2 paper). Only working research sources may be cited with a minimum of 10 well-balanced, recent (last ten years) academic, authoritative sources. General dictionaries, encyclopedias, and class textbooks will not be used as resources. The thesis sentence is to be underlined.

Two copies of the final paper must be submitted: one print copy and one electronic copy. Electronic second copies of the paper are on CD and in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. The Appendix is submitted only with the print copy of the paper. The Appendix is the final complete binder.

THE CLIENT PROJECT. Two copies of the project are to be submitted. One copy of the project is to be submitted in the original medium chosen for the project and one electronic copy. In the event of a print media project, full-color (PMS correct) camera-ready composite output in the final form of the project must be submitted. Simple computer output is not acceptable. Electronic second copies of the project are on CD and in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format or in another approved format for multimedia projects. The full and complete project (and copy) are submitted with the paper.

Project evaluation: Senior project clients must agree to write verification letters directly to the professor on official business letterhead with an original signature (no emails) that: 1) verify that the project has been completed; 2) evaluate the quality of the project; and 3) evaluate the performance of the student. These letters are due by the day of project defense. A letter from the professor to clients specifying the content of these evaluations is available in the instructor's public folder.

THE ORAL DEFENSE. The above thesis/project will also be presented orally to the department faculty, interested students, family, and guests. A 20-minute (minimum) presentation summary of the thesis will be delivered accompanied by demonstrations, selected screenings (excerpts), or other appropriate materials describing or demonstrating the project. Thank you comments must be planned and written and may not exceed 1 minute. Thank-you comments do not count in the 20-minute minimum time requirement AND may not cause the 30-minute maximum to be exceeded.

Final presentation rehearsals may be held in Brinser Lecture Hall by scheduling such with the department secretary who will reserve all open time. You are limited to the regular open/operation hours of the Steinman labs during the day, nights, and weekends in order to use equipment.

<u>Grading</u>	1. Project Management: These items are graded P/NP. Failure to submit assignments on time will earn a ZERO (NP) and is grounds for dismissal from the course.	10%
	2. One oral research presentation	10%
	3. Professional Identity: Résumé and Portfolio	20%
	4. Mid-term research paper -- literature review (Ch. 1-2)	15%
	5. Senior Project: (15% each: thesis, client project, and oral defense)	45%

Grading Scale

A 100-94	B 86-84	C 76-74	D 66-64
A- 93-90	B- 83-80	C- 73-70	D- 63-60
B+ 89-87	C+ 79-77	D+ 69-67	F 59-0

Special Note: Seniors must be aware that all labs and studios are in use by other classes and department organizations. Seniors do not have priority in use. All scheduling policies must be observed. Specific arrangements must be made with the faculty member in charge of the production area for use of restricted equipment (especially digital equipment). Special training and clearances may be needed.

All Senior Projects will be presented in Brinser Lecture Hall. Students must attend all class presentations. Presenters may be absent for the presentation IMMEDIATELY preceding theirs for preparation only. Presenters may also be absent for the presentation immediately following theirs only to be with family. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

The instructor reserves the right to alter course contents or adjust pace of assignment to accommodate class progress.

Course Calendar

Tues	Jan. 19	(1)	Course Introduction: Explanation of Course Expectations (public folder). Begin to prepare portfolio. Introduction to senior client project - general topic due Day 5 , Final Approval Day 7 .
Thur	21	(2)	Library Refresher Session in Library Assignment: 5 min. (max.) oral presentation (formal) of career plans, rationale, responsibilities.
Tues	26	(3)	Class oral presentations: concentration, career plans, job classification, and responsibility. Graded P/NP
Thur	28	(4)	APA Style Primer and Plagiarism Session
Tues	Feb. 2	(5)	Senior project topic discussion (oral). Review structure of project proposal. The Senior Project Proposal due Day 7 (instructor's public folder). Review Progress Report Binder.
Thur	4	(6)	Exercises in topic selection/narrowing the research question. Submit The Research Plan on Day 8
Tues	9	(7)	Review structure of a literature search. (Exercise in outlining a paper.) Senior Project Proposal due. Client must sign and initial all pages of the proposal. A client letter must be attached outlining project plan. Review "Expectations" for paper.
Thur	11	(8)	Writing and organizing research papers. (The Research Paper and periodical listings are available in the instructor's public folder). Sample Paper available for review from the secretary. The Research Plan due.
Tues	16	(9)	Review Research Plans. Chapter 1 due.
Thur	18	(10)	Defining Résumés. Self-Analysis and Résumé Structure. Résumé Content.
Tues	23	(11)	Résumé Writing Style and Formatting (Résumé examples). Assignment: Begin to formulate and prepare résumé. Résumé due Day 23.
Thur	25	(12)	Résumé Production. Cover Letters. First progress report on senior project due. Client must sign cover sheet and initial all pages. First report includes, Media Audit, Media Production Proposal (treatment), Timeline and Budget.
Tues	Mar. 2	(13)	The Portfolio: Developing it to complement your résumé. Assignment: Plan a strategy to develop a portfolio.
Thur	4	(14)	Physically organizing the portfolio - using it to project your image. Screenings of portfolio, video of résumé tapes. Summarize portfolio requirements and grading expectations. Portfolio due Day 23.
			SPRING BREAK
Tues	16	(15)	Focus Groups and SCAD Abstracts
Thur	18	(16)	Mid-term, Chapters 1 & 2 due.
Tues	23	(17)	Salary, benefits, questions. http://www.jobweb.org/ "Negotiating the Job Offer" Grad. Employment Survey (public folder)
Thur	25	(18)	Second progress report on senior project due. Client must sign cover sheet and initial all pages. Relating Chapter 3 and 4 to the literature review. Sign up for conference times.
Tues	30	(19)	Work Day
Thur	Apr. 1		Monday Class Schedule before Easter Holiday
Tues	6	(20)	Individual Conferences- by appointment
Thur	8	(21)	Individual Conferences- by appointment
Tues	13	(22)	Individual Conferences- by appointment
Thur	15	(23)	Portfolio and Résumé Due. Assign dates for mini and final presentations. Review professor's expectations for the thesis, project, and defense (instructor's public folder) Client final evaluation letter guidelines are available in the instructor's public folder. Student sample paper for review is off reserve. Evaluation form for PPP.
Tues	20	(24)	Special BLH Class Session to review presentations in that room. (Secretary will reserve BLH)
Thur	22	(25)	Work Day
Tues	27	(26)	Scholarship Day! All students will present a brief summary of research for senior projects.
Thur	29	(27)	Student Evaluations. Screen sample defenses.
Fri	30		Two copies of the Project & Thesis are due to the sec. by 4:00 PM. Paper copy of thesis is not stapled but bound in a folder or comb binding.

Mon	May 3	(28)	Senior Projects 6:00 – 9:00 (Green Room S208)
Tues	4		Senior Projects 6:00 - 9:00 (Green Room S208)
Wed	5		Senior Projects 6:00 – 9:00 (Green Room S208).
Thur	6		Senior Projects 6:00 – 9:00 (Green Room S208). Departmental Senior Evaluation.

Final Examination Dates. Senior Project Presentations at night are in lieu of this meeting. It is suggested that students attend the presentations of other sections of Com 485.

Appendix A: We-town.com Specifics

Each student working for the we-town.com site will commit to working on 3 pkg's or podcasts for the site during the semester. No client letter is needed, instead, on Tuesday, Feb. 9 (Day 7) you must hand in a story budget for each of the three stories you will be covering. The following is an example:

Story #1: Red Cross Volunteers

This story will be about a group of Red Cross volunteers from Elizabethtown who are heading to Haiti to help with earthquake relief there. The country was hit by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake in January causing widespread damage. Five volunteers are heading to the country to help with cleanup efforts. The volunteers are leaving at 5 a.m. on January 30 from John Martin's home at 105 Maple Street in Elizabethtown.

Contacts: Mike Smith: Red Cross, phone number: 717-361-1889

John Martin: Red Cross Volunteer headed to Haiti, phone number: 717-361-8877

Chris McKenna: Red Cross Volunteer headed to Haiti, phone number: 717-361-1446

The story budget represents a contract between the student and the instructor to produce the 3 stories listed. If changes need to be made to the stories for any reason, they must first be approved by the instructor.

Each story you do for the we-town site must have a *minimum of 2 sources*. No single story sources are allowed! If you turn in a story with fewer than 2 sources you will receive a 0 on the story. Stories are expected to be between 1:30 and 2:00 minutes long. If a story will be shorter or longer than this timeframe it requires prior approval by the instructor.

Below are the due dates for each of the 3 stories. Stories must be posted on the we-town.com site by the dates listed below. You can feel free to post stories earlier than these dates.

Story #1: Tuesday, Feb. 23 (Day 11) at the beginning of class

Story #2: Tuesday, March 30 (Day 19) at the beginning of class

Story #3: Friday, April 30 by 4 p.m.

Appendix B: Equipment Sign-out Procedures

Equipment Sign-out Procedures

- 1) When signing out any piece of equipment, students and faculty must fill out an equipment sign-out card. The sign-out card contains information about the user, the equipment, and a notice that the user will accept full responsibility for equipment that is missing, returned damaged, or not brought back in a timely manner.
- 2) Every piece of equipment located in Room 203A has been assigned a department number. This number is to be used when equipment is signed out and returned.
- 3) The SLA is to keep the sign-out card in the card file until the equipment is returned. This procedure must be closely followed so that an accurate inventory can be maintained. Once the equipment is returned, the card is then moved from the sign-out file into the expired card file.
- 4) Every piece of equipment must be inspected for damage by the SLA-on-duty upon its return. If any problem is found with the equipment, the SLA is to take the equipment and card to the Secretary or the Director of Broadcasting. If neither one is available, the SLA must send an email detailing the problem with the equipment to both the Secretary and the Director of Broadcasting.
- 5) Equipment can be reserved ahead of time by signing up in the SLA office. Equipment may be signed out for up to (3) three hours a day, but for no more than (9) nine hours per week. No equipment may be checked out overnight. Exceptions may only be made through written permission from a faculty member. Failure to return equipment on time will result in fine of \$10.00 per day. A repeat of late return of equipment will include a fine and suspension of sign-out privileges.

Video Editing Suite Sign Up Rules and Regulations

1. The sign up book is located in Room 203.
2. Suites may be reserved in advance. A user may sign up for no more than two (2) hours each week. If a student signs up for more than (2) two hours in a week his/her name will be erased from the book, and this could result in the suspension of studio privileges.
3. Failure to show up within the first fifteen (15) minutes of a scheduled reservation means that the reservation is canceled.
4. If no one is using a studio, a student may walk in to use the facilities but must sign up in the book before beginning use.
5. Any equipment problems in the studio are to be immediately reported on the SLA trouble form. Students are never to attempt to fix equipment.
6. Equipment is never to leave any of the editing suites, nor is it to ever be exchanged from suite-to-suite.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING CARE OF THE EQUIPMENT YOU CHECK OUT. YOU CAN BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGE TO THE EQUIPMENT CAUSED BY NEGLIGENCE OR NEGLIGENCE. SO BE VERY CAREFUL!