

Elizabethtown College
Department of Communications
Course Syllabus

Com 485 - Communications Seminar
4 Credits
Fall 2009

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206G Steinman Center (1386)
Prerequisites - Senior Major

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 Objectives 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. _____. 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 databases: Communication & Mass Media Complete and Business Source Elite.
6. Please note that 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 "No Secrets" in department library. Project descriptions.
8. Class (computer-storage) Directories

Academic Integrity All students are to conform to the various 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 meet course requirements, you must:

- 1) contact the Coordinator of Learning Services and Disability Services, Tamara Longsderff, in the Center of Student Success, BSC 226, (717) 361-1549, longsdltl@etown.edu, AND
- 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.

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 or tests missed as a result of an absence will only be made up by PRIOR arrangement with the instructor. Unless allowed to be made up, a grade of 0 will be given.

Absences beyond two will be permitted only for students participating in intercollegiate athletics. 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.

Miscellaneous

1. ALL WORK MUST BE NEATLY TYPED. Consider yourself a professional and prepare your materials as such. All written submission should be double-spaced, 12 point type, Times or Times Roman font, one inch margins on all edges, and proper slugs or page numbering. 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 knowledge and consent of the instructor will not be permitted and the project will earn a grade of 0.
3. All oral presentations cited are to be formal presentations demonstrating excellent oral skills, presentation skills, and accompanying professional visuals and other materials. 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 usually be formally written and typed documents, generally turned in to the instructor. These documents will be graded excellent (E), satisfactory (S), and unsatisfactory (U).

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 generally include the following:

- 1) Senior Project Proposal
- 2) Research Plan
- 3) A progress (status) report of the project
- 4) Journal -- 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)
- 5) Media Audit
- 6) Media Production Proposal
- 7) project time lines -- 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.
- 8) Budget
- 9) Content Analysis, and
- 10) Production Elements (storyboards, scripts, thumbnails).

For each binder submission, the final journal entry is a summary report of progress. 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. The **second report requires** a section reviewing specific important topic/project related content. In both instances, an analysis of findings or conclusions drawn from these activities is needed. These are narrative documents.

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 4 x 6 will be permitted-keywords only.
3. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY A formally planned and prepared résumé will be developed by each student, in camera-ready or printed form. 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. LITERATURE SEARCH (MID-TERM RESEARCH PAPER) 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 Chapters 1 and 2 of the final paper. Thesis sentence is underlined.
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 actually 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) sources. It is expected that general dictionaries, encyclopedias, and class textbooks will not be used. 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 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 output must be submitted along with a complete printer instruction sheet. 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 to the professor 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. They do not count in the 20-minute minimum time requirement but 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 E, S, U, will raise or lower borderline final grades.	
	2. One oral research presentation	10%
	3. Professional Identity: Résumé	15%
	4. Professional Identity: Portfolio	15%
	5. Mid-term research paper -- literature review (Ch. 1-2)	15%
	6. Senior Project: (15% each: thesis, client project, and oral defense)	45%

Grading Scale Work will be awarded (+) and (-) letter grades each corresponding to a fixed numerical value on a scale of 10.

9.3 A+ 9.0 A 8.7 A- 7.3 C+ 7.0 C 6.7 C-
8.3 B 8.0 B 7.7 B- 6.3 D+ 6.0 D 5.7 D-

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 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.

Course Calendar

Tues	Sep. 1	(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 . Open Letter to the class of . . . Assignment: Read "The Capstone Course" (public folder)
Thurs	3	(2)	Examining the field of Communications: Concentrations Assignment: 5 min. (max.) oral presentation (formal) of career plans, rationale, responsibilities.
Tues	8	(3)	Class oral presentations: concentration, career plans, job classification, and responsibility. Graded E,S,U.
Thurs	10	(4)	Studying Communication. The Research Plan (instructor's public folder) Topic selection, narrowing a topic, a literature search. Assignment: choose a topic, narrow - be prepared to discuss.
Tues	15	(5)	Senior project topic discussion (oral). Review structure of project proposal. The Senior Project Proposal due Day 7 (instructor's public folder).
Thurs	17	(6)	Exercises in topic selection/narrowing the research question. Submit The Research Plan on Day 8 Library: Research and Reference Presentation. Search strategy, finding tools.
Tues	22	(7)	Review and screen 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.
Thurs	24	(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. Review Project Proposals. Resubmit revisions immediately. The Research Plan due.
Tues	29	(9)	Review Research Plans. Resubmit revisions immediately. Review Progress Report Binder.
Thurs	Oct. 1	(10)	Defining Résumés. Self-Analysis and Résumé Structure. Résumé Content.
Tues	6	(11)	Résumé Writing Style and Formatting (Résumé examples). Assignment: Begin to formulate and prepare résumé. Résumé due Day 14.
Thurs	8	(12)	FALL BREAK
Tues	13	(13)	Résumé Production. Cover Letters. First progress report on senior project due. Client must sign cover sheet and initial all pages. See guidelines (Media Audit).
Thurs	15		The Portfolio: Developing it to complement your résumé. Assignment: Plan a strategy to develop a portfolio.
Tues	20	(14)	Résumé Due. 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 22.
Thurs	22	(15)	Salary, benefits, questions. http://www.jobweb.org/ "Negotiating the Job Offer" Grad. Employment Survey (public folder)
Tues	27	(16)	Mid-term, Literature Review Due (Chapters 1 & 2)
Thurs	29	(17)	Focus Groups. (PPT)
Tues	Nov. 3	(18)	Second progress report on senior project due. Client must sign cover sheet and initial all pages. See guidelines (Project Content Analysis). Relating Chapter 3 and 4 to the literature review. Sign up for conference times.
Thurs	5	(19)	Individual Conferences- by appointment
Tues	10	(20)	Individual Conferences- by appointment
Thurs	12	(21)	Individual Conferences- by appointment
Tues.	17	(22)	Portfolio 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.
Thurs	19	(23)	Special BLH Class Session to review presentations in that room. (Secretary will reserve BLH)
Tues	24	(24)	Student Evaluations. Screen sample defenses.
Thurs	26	(25)	HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
Tues	Dec. 1	(26)	Student Presentation (Group A) Videotape.
Thurs	3	(27)	Student Presentation (Group B) Videotape.
Fri	4		Two copies of the Project & Thesis are due to the sec. by 4:00 PM. Paper copy of thesis is comb or spiral bound by Copy Services or other ancillary service provider.
Mon	Dec. 7		Senior Projects 6:00 (Green Room S208)
Tues	8		Senior Projects 6:00 (Green Room S208).
Wed	9		Senior Projects 6:00 (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.

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 members who have attended. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

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