DIGITAL MEDIA WRITING PRACTICUM in Fall 2018 (CM5062)

Course Code	CM5062	**Professor(s)**	Hannah Westley
Prerequisites	None	**Office Number**	Grenelle 4
Class Schedule	T: 15:20-18:15 in C-505	**Office Hours**	Tuesday and Friday by appointment
Credits	4	**Email**	hwestley@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2018	**Office Tel. Ext.**	

Course Description

This course is a hand's-on workshop that gives graduate students practical, career-driven experience in digital writing, website curation, and personal branding. Students also gain a conceptual understanding of digital media trends to prepare them professionally for careers in digital journalism, social media, branding, marketing, communications, advertising, public relations, and NGOs.

The course is based on the premise that the medium in which we write influences the way we write. Writing for an online readership, as today's journalists will tell you, is not the same as writing for a print readership. How do we harness the power of online rhetoric for business purposes? How do writers focus a reader's interest in our attention economy? How do you make your online presence count? Every week, you will be producing written work which you will post to the class blog. This exercise will help you flex your writing muscle in all online genres. It will also allow you to receive immediate feedback both from your peers and myself. The workshop component of the course creates a "newsroom" setting where students produce and manage online content in the form of columns and articles posted on a dedicated website: http://peacockplume.fr

The course is divided into three parallel components:

1. Digital Writing: Students will contribute columns to the Peacock Plume site. This "newsroom" segment of the course will encourage students to develop their voice as writers on themes and issues pertinent to their career goals and personal brands.

2. Personal Branding: Students will study and analyze personal branding trends and techniques. Each student works on a professional-grade online profile and portfolio through columns and social networks.

3. Digital Industry Trends: Students will study industry trends in the digital media sector, ranging from journalism and branding to marketing, advertising, and PR. Students will give a case study presentation, either solo or jointly with another student, on one selected theme.

A note on the readings: these may be subject to revision as the course progresses, given the topicality of the subject matter. For the case studies, I have provided one scholarly reading per subject. I expect you to research and find other readings relevant to your presentation topic. You will submit a bibliography when you present to the class.

GRADUATE PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives of the MA in Global Communications program:

1. Understand and use qualitative and/or quantitative communications research methodologies;

2. Be aware of key issues in debates about globalization and their relationship to forms of global media and culture;

3. Develop critical perspectives on the major concepts and theories in Media Studies, Communication Studies and Cultural Studies;

4. Develop a practical competence in a field of contemporary communications.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND THE COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course contributes to the following student learning objectives of the MAGC program:

1. Gaining a critical understanding of concepts, dynamics and issues related to digital media;

2. Gaining an industry-level perspective on core trends driving digital content creation and consumption;

3. Gaining practical experience enhancing digital writing and content production and curation skills.

Course Learning Outcomes

acquire a critical and analytical understanding of digital media industry trends, preparing them for careers in media-related industries
acquire writing and content-creation skills, preparing them practically for careers in online journalism, adverting, marketing, branding and public relations
develop personal branding skills, preparing them for careers in digital media and other professions.

General Education

Course Outline

<u>**CLASS SCHEDULE:**</u>

<u>*September*</u>

<u>*Week I - 10th- 14th*</u>

Tuesday 11th

<u>**TOPICS:**</u> Introduction and Overview

Style guide, getting started, ethics, Trello, Slack, editors

<u>**READINGS**</u>

- Online ethics agreement, getting started guide, style guide

Blog: 250 words on why you are taking this course

September 16th– last day to drop/add courses online

<u>*Week II - 17th– 21st*</u>

Tuesday 18th

<u>**TOPICS:**</u> Journalism in the digital age; impact on newspapers and magazines. Social media and news consumption; Twitter and Facebook as gatekeepers.

<u>**READINGS**</u>

- Reflecting on the state of the news today: https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/aug/31/alan-rusbridger-who-broke-the-news

- How should today's news be delivered: http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/01/11/publics-globally-want-unbiased-news-coverage-but-are-divided-on-whether-their-news-media-deliver/
- *Reuters Digital News Report*, Key findings 2018: http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2018/overview-key-findings-2018/
- *Facebook is eating the world*, Emily Bell: https://www.cjr.org/analysis/facebook_and_media.php

Blog: 200 words parody of a news lede for a conservative news organization

Blog: Pitch your first opinion column

Week III - 24th– 28th

Tuesday 25th

TOPICS: Short and long form writing online

READINGS

- Writing News: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/sep/25/writing.journalism.news
- Reflecting on the role of social media and the news: http://mediashift.org/2015/09/how-social-media-platforms-are-changing-the-business-of-news/
- Longform journalism: http://www.fastcompany.com/3042312/most-creative-people/the-secrets-of-writing-smart-longform-articles-that-go-absolutely-viral
- Speaking Truth to Power: http://niemanreports.org/articles/a-century-of-pulitzer-journalism-speaking-truth-to-power/

Blog: 200 words parody of a news lede for a liberal news organisation

October

Week IV – 1st- 5th

Tuesday 2nd

TOPICS Opinion Writing. Personal Branding Audits.

READINGS

- *Personal branding: An Essential Choice?*Machaz & Shokoofh, 2016, on Blackboard
- Writing
  Tips: https://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/writing/how-to-write-an-op-ed-or-column
- Best
  practise: https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2017/12/21/the-op-eds-that-moved-us-in-2017/?utm_term=.f249c8bc376d

Blog: 200 words of first person celebrity blog

Deadline for publication of first columns

Week V – 8th-12th

Tuesday 9th

TOPICS Attention Economy and Affective Communication

READINGS

- The branding
  moment:https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebeccavogels/2018/08/26/how-to-design-for-emotional-brand-experiences-in-the-attention-economy/#f12f19e25ad0
- The End of the Attention Economy?https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlwZDwxuChU
- *Regimes of Posttruth, Postpolitics, and Attention Economies*, Harsin, 2015, on Blackboard

Blog: 200 word lede for a feature article using a drop lede (narrative hook)

Week VI - 15th- 19th

Tuesday 16th

TOPICS Headlines, Clickbait and SEO

READINGS

- *Towards a pragma-linguistic framework for the study of sensationalism in news headlines*, Molek-Kozakowska, 2013, on Blackboard

- The curiosity

gap: https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/11/clickbait-what-is/382545/

- Journalism and SEO: *The Going Down of the Pun*, Richmond, 2008, on Blackboard

Blog: Pitch for second opinion column

Week VII – 22nd– 26th

Tuesday 23rd

TOPICS Writing for social media: assess your audience, customize content, effective strategy and communication

READINGS

- Writing Tips: https://www.agorapulse.com/blog/social-media-writing-tips
- Social Media for Business: https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-for-business/
- *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*, Jose Van Dijck, 2013, extract on Blackboard

Blog: 200 word press release for forthcoming Paris event

October 26th, Mid-semester grades due

Week VIII – 29th – Nov. 2nd

Tuesday 30th- SessionI

TOPICS The Op-ed of everything; journalism and trust; whose opinion is it anyway?

READINGS

- *Defining Objectivity within Journalism: An Overview*, Wien, 2005 https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9f56/10e6ba3d9a2658cbe6e07fbd62964b2a12e1.pdf
- *American Views: Trust, Media and Democracy*, Knight Foundation Report https://newrepublic.com/article/146895/learning-trust

Blog: 200 word internal communication memo

Deadline for publication of second columns

October 31st, November 2nd, (included) fall break, no classes

November

Week IX – 5th– 9th

Tuesday 6th

TOPICS Fake News? Reading horizontally across the Internet.

READINGS

- *Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election*, Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017, on Blackboard

- How do journalists verify information: http://www.poynter.org/2013/new-research-details-how-journalists-verify-information/203728/
- The Panama Papers: the largest international investigative journalism project of all time: http://qz.com/729106/how-two-german-newspaper-reporters-broke-the-story-behind-the-panama-papers/

Blog: 150 word case study abstract

November 9th, Last day to withdraw from a course/no credit option

Week X - 12th-16th

Tuesday 13th

TOPICS Personal Branding. Fame, celebrity, and reputation in the digital era. Case Studies.

READINGS

- *Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy*, Marwick, 2015, on Blackboard

Blog: Pitch for third column

Week XI -19th– 23rd

Tuesday 20th

TOPICS Reputation management. Case Studies.

READINGS

- *Reputation management: the new face of corporate public relations?*Hutton et al, 2001, on Blackboard

Week XII -26th- 30th

Tuesday 27st

TOPICS Social media in NGOs and international organizations. Case Studies.

READINGS

- *Information, Community, and Action: How Nonprofit Organisations Use Social Media*, Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012 https://academic.oup.com/jcmc/article/17/3/337/4067685

December

Week XIII – 3rd– 7th

Tuesday 4th

TOPICS Digital impact on PR, crisis management. Case Studies.

READINGS

- *A Work-In-Process Literature Review: Incorporating Social Media in Risk and Crisis Communication,*Veil et al, 2011, on Blackboard

Deadline for publication of third columns

Week XIV - 10th- 14th

Tuesday 11th

TOPICS Portfolio review, final case study presentations, course conclusion

READINGS

December 12th, Last day of classes, December 13th-16th, Reading days

December 17th – 21st, Final exams

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

GRADING:

1. Columns: 30% - Assessment of columns contributed to the Peacock Plume site, graded according to written quality, accuracy, use of sources and adherence to professional ethical standards. Students will manage their own backend profiles on the site and be expected to write and post their columns with multimedia enriched content (photos, video, GIFs). One column will be submitted every three weeks. A minimum of three columns is expected by end of term.

2. In-Class Presentation: 20% - Students will give a case study presentation on an issue related to digital media: journalism, advertising, PR, branding. Presentations should be 20-30 minutes and be professional-level with research, graphs, data.

3. Personal Branding Portfolio: 20% - Assessment of student's online profile, including columns, blogs, and social media activity (Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, Snapchat, etc). At the beginning of term students will submit an "audit" of their own online profile, including assessment of strengths and weakness. Progress will be monitored during the term. Also, in-class discussion of profiles will give students the opportunity to learn from the assessment from other students. Assessment will be based on progress achieved over the term.

4. Contribution to the class blog: 15% - Writing exercises and peer review.

4. Participation/Attendance: 15% - Student's attendance and contribution to class discussions.

Other