AEC 4031: The Communication Process in Agricultural and Life Sciences
Fall 2014
T 6 period (12:50-1:40); R 6-7 periods (12:50-2:45)
http://aec.ifas.ufl.edu/aec4031

INSTRUCTOR:
Ricky W. Telg, Ph.D.
121E Bryant Hall
Phone: 273-2094
E-Mail: rwtelg@ufl.edu

TEACHING ASSISTANT:

OFFICE HOURS: MW 11-noon and as appointment as needed

CLASS MEETS in 0202 WEIMER.

COURSE OUTLINE: Effective communication is at the heart of successful operation in every enterprise in agricultural and natural resource-based industries. This course is designed to teach communication concepts and the knowledge of how to apply those concepts in the workplace. The goal is to broaden your experience and move you as close as possible to the professional level. All discussions and activities are planned to involve you in "real world" ways.

OBJECTIVES: This course will concentrate on expanding writing experience, strengthening and refining communication skills, raising the level of professional performance, and engendering greater confidence in communication. Following the completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Write promotional, persuasive, and news pieces for various audiences (mass media, internal, and external).
• Search for jobs in communication and leadership development.
• Think critically about issues facing the agricultural industry.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:
Successful students will read assigned materials before class and be prepared for discussion with the instructor and fellow students.

• Agricultural Communications in Action: A Hands-On Approach by Telg & Irani.
  o You will need this textbook for other communications courses in the department.
  (NOTE: You will use the AP Stylebook in AEC 4035 and forever after as a communications and leadership professional.)

CLASS FORMAT: On Tuesdays, the class will be devoted to lecture and discussion. Most Thursdays will focus on writing assignments and editing.

GRADING AND GRADING SCALE:
A = 930-1000
A- = 900-929
B+ = 860-899
B = 830-859
B- = 800-829
C+ = 760-799
C = 730-759
C- = 700-729
D+ = 660-699
D = 630-659
D- = 600-629
E = 599 and below

For information about UF grades and grading policies, including minus grades, visit http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html.
Assignments | Possible Point | Word Count
--- | --- | ---
MBTI “speed read” | 50 | 500
Ag story 1 | 100 | 1,250
Ag story 2 | 100 | 1,250
Story pitch for Ag Story 2 | 25 | 
News releases (1 x 75, 2 x 100) | 275 | 2,000 (total)
Resume assignment | 50 | 1,000
Exams (2 x 100) | 200 | 
Quizzes (5 at 20 pts. each) | 100 | 
In-class writing/attendance/participation | 50 | 
E-portfolio | 50 | 

1,000 | 6,000

All out-of-class written assignments MUST be *typed*.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

- **MBTI “speed read”:** Based on the results of the MBTI, students will reflect on their communication practices, as evidenced by the MBTI. Students will then be asked to “speed read” someone – a friend, relative, roommate – to see how that person likes to receive communication. **Word count: 500**
- **Agriculture stories:** Students will write two stories about some aspect of agricultural and life sciences research, education, or Extension programs or a topic related to agricultural and life sciences. For the second ag story, students must prepare a “story pitch” to sell Dr. Telg or his TA on the story topic PRIOR to beginning the actual story development process. **Word count (total): 2,500**
- **News releases:** Students will cover presentations in class and write news releases about them. **Word count (total): 2,000**
- **Resume assignment:** Students will research a job related to the Communication and Leadership Development specialization. Students will create a job description based on their research. Students then will write a cover letter and a resume to apply for that job. The job research and description will be used to evaluate the resume and cover letter. **Word count: 1,000**
- **Quizzes:** Quizzes will be interspersed throughout the semester and cover Associated Press Style, current events, in-class notes, and course readings.
- **In-class writing/attendance/participation:** Several in-class activities will take place. Students are expected to participate in the activities and attend classes. Attendance is mandatory.
- **E-portfolio:** Students will create or add to an e-portfolio of course assignments.

**GORDON RULE WRITING REQUIREMENTS:** “The Writing Requirement (Gordon Rule) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.” Course grades now have two components. To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. The instructor and/or teaching assistants will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. This course meets the 6,000-word Gordon Rule Writing Requirement.

**LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:** A **20-percent per day** deduction will be assessed for assignments turned in late. Work more than a week late will not be accepted. All written assignments are due at the beginning of class. A paper not turned in at the assigned time is considered a day late (-20%).

**WRITING AND REWRITING:** You are expected to submit each major assignment as a *publishable* piece (*Publishable* means that it is good enough to be included in a newsletter, newspaper, or magazine.) You will be able to rewrite EITHER your first ag story assignment or your first news release assignment. No rewrites will be allowed for other assignments. If you choose to rewrite your ag story or news release, assume that the first version should be submitted in a format that is ready for publication. (This is **not** to be a “rough” draft.) The rewrite receives a lower grade.

**EXAMPLE Writing/Rewriting Scale for 100-point assignments**

- First submission possible top score: 100
- First rewrite possible top score: 95
IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT WRITING:

• **Fact Errors**: Please note that you are responsible for checking the facts of your story before its final submission. This means contacting your sources and having them approve such things as the spelling of their names and correct quotations. If your paper contains fact errors, your paper will be subject to large point deductions.

• **Plagiarism**: A student who represents another’s work as the original work of the student is plagiarizing. Instructors will compare your stories’ content to Web pages (so do not use Web pages’ content in your stories). You will not be able to use prior assignments for this class. “Copying” your own work is also plagiarism. If you do not think you will get caught plagiarizing, you are wrong. Plagiarism will be dealt with up to the full extent of the UF Honor Code. A full explanation of plagiarism and its consequences can be found at [http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/07b/studentplagiarism.html](http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/07b/studentplagiarism.html). You will definitely get a ZERO for any assignment that you are caught plagiarizing for, and possibly dismissal from this course (which is a required course for the major). **This is serious, so treat it as such!!! ALL stories and news releases will be submitted via CANVAS**

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS: Students are required to attend class and to be in class on time. Only documented doctor’s excuses or UF-approved activities will be excused. Students’ grades will be lowered if they repeatedly miss class or are late. To me, being late is the same as being absent, so be to class on time.

DIGITAL AUDIO RECORDERS: A limited number of digital audio recorders are available for reservation through Dr. Telg. You may check out a digital audio recorder for one day, an overnight (returning it by 9 a.m. the following day), or over the weekend (returning it by 9 a.m. on Monday). If an audio recorder is not returned within one day of when it is checked out, an academic hold will be placed on your record, preventing you from preregistering for classes, until the recorder is returned.

CELL PHONES: Students are asked to turn off their cellular phones before entering the classroom.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING: In all courses in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication’s Communication and Leadership Development (CLD) specialization, the following writing standards are expected to be followed, unless otherwise specified for a particular writing assignment. Not following these writing standards will result in substantially lower grades on writing assignments.

• Proper grammar and punctuation are mandatory.

• Proper sentence structure is required. This means…
  o Not using “tweet-talk” in your assignments.
  o Making sure that your sentences have a subject, verb, and (when needed) an object.
  o Not having sentence fragments.
  o And anything else that would pertain to “proper sentence structure.”

• No use of first person (I, me, my, mine, our) unless denoted within the assignment rubric.

• NO use of contractions.

• Good thoughts/content throughout the writing assignment.

• For assignments that require citations, use American Psychological Association style. Proper APA citation and reference document is expected.

• For assignments that are more reporter-style articles (news stories, news releases, public relations writing), you are expected to follow Associated Press Style, as discussed in AEC 4031.

EXPECTATIONS FOR DESIGN: In all courses in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication’s Communication and Leadership Development (CLD) specialization, the following design standards are expected to be followed, unless otherwise specified for a particular writing assignment. Not following these design standards will result in substantially lower grades on design-related assignments.

• Proper grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure are mandatory. Although these are design assignments, writing has to be perfect so as not to detract from the design.

• For assignments that feature more reporter-style articles (news stories, news releases, public relations writing), you are expected to follow Associated Press Style, as discussed in AEC 4031.

• Use the proper photographic settings for the assignment (300 ppi for printed photos; 72 ppi for Web). Pixilated photos will result in lower grades.

• Students should not use copyrighted materials for design assignments. For example you may not “borrow” a graphic or design. Commercial artwork that is purchased may be used for assignments.
Similarly, you may use ideas for a graphic/design assignment, but the use of the *actual* graphic/design is not acceptable.

- The following minimal design skills are expected to be demonstrated on all design assignments. The ability to resize an image, create documents in multiple columns, insert a graphic on a page, insert text with a graphic, alter the color of text and/or graphics. Additionally, the student should have moderate ability with the following software in order to complete design assignments:
  - Microsoft PowerPoint
  - Microsoft Word
  - Adobe Photoshop (photographs)
  - Adobe Illustrator (graphics). This software program is taught only in AEC 4035. The expectations for actual graphic design in other courses will be minimal.
  - Adobe InDesign (print layout)
  - WordPress (Web)
  - Final Cut Pro X (video)

The University of Florida has an agreement with Lynda.com to provide FREE online tutorials to students and faculty on many software programs. If you feel “rusty” with any program, after being introduced to it in an AEC course, it is *highly recommended* that you take it upon yourself to go through some of the Lynda.com tutorials: [http://www.it.ufl.edu/training/](http://www.it.ufl.edu/training/). Click on the Lynda.com yellow box on the right side of the screen.

**Academic Honesty, Software Use, UF Counseling Services, Services for Students with Disabilities**

In 1995 the UF student body enacted a new honor code and voluntarily committed itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. When students enroll at the university, they commit themselves to the standard drafted and enacted by students. In adopting this honor code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the university community. Students who enroll at the university commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the honor code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the honor code is bound by honor to take corrective action. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon community acceptance and enforcement of the honor code.

The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: “*On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.*”

The university requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the university will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior. Students should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean or Student Honor Court. *(Source: 2008-2009 Undergraduate Catalog)*

It is assumed all work will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as a *group project*, in writing by the instructor. This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.

**Software Use:** All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

**Students with Disabilities:** The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. 0001 Reid Hall, 392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)
**Campus Helping Resources:** Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. Both the Counseling Center and Student Mental Health Services provide confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. The Counseling Center is located at 301 Peabody Hall (next to Criser Hall). Student Mental Health Services is located on the second floor of the Student Health Care Center in the Infirmary.

- **University Counseling Center**, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, [www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu)
- **Career Resource Center**, CR-100 JWRU, 392-1602, [www.crc.ufl.edu](http://www.crc.ufl.edu)
- **Student Mental Health Services**, Rm. 245 Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, [www.smhs.ufl.edu](http://www.smhs.ufl.edu)
  - Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)
  - Center for Sexual Assault / Abuse Recovery & Education (CARE)
  - Eating Disorders Program
  - Employee Assistance Program
  - Suicide Prevention Program
COURSE SCHEDULE
SECTION 1 MEDIA WRITING

Week 1:
August 26
TOPIC: Course introduction
TOPIC: Grammar, punctuation, Telg’s pet peeves, Associated Press style
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 5: News Media Writing
WEB: Associated Press Style
VIDEO: Framing the Message

August 28
TOPIC: News writing, leads, elements of a good news story
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 5: News Media Writing
WEB: Attribution
Basic Copyediting Marks
IN CLASS: AP Style “Pre-Quiz”

Week 2:
September 2
TOPIC: News writing (CALS Connection speaker)
WEB: Guidelines for CALS Connection Reporters
IN CLASS: Write practice lead and news story from a video.
IN CLASS: ASSIGN AG STORY 1 IDEAS.

September 4
TOPIC: Covering speeches, meetings, news conferences, press briefings
WEB: Example Press Briefing
IN CLASS: Quiz 1
PRIOR TO SEPT. 11: Prepare your own press briefing to give to fellow student.

Week 3:
September 9
TOPIC: News releases
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 5: News Media Writing
Ch. 13: Media Relations (pp. 246-250)
WEB: Model News Release
IN CLASS: Critique interview story.

September 11
TOPIC: Interviewing/sources of information
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 5: News Media Writing: Conducting Interviews for News Stories
WEB: Writing and Interviewing Techniques
Example Personal Profile Questions
IN CLASS: Write student interview story.
IN CLASS: Quiz 2

Week 4:
September 16
TOPIC: Media kits
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 17: Communication Campaign Development

September 18
TOPIC: Ethics
WEB: Colleges Turn to Software to Detect Applicants' Plagiarism
IN CLASS: Write practice news release, based on ethics lecture.
DUE BY 5 p.m. THURSDAY, SEPT. 18: PRACTICE NEWS RELEASE (VIA CANVAS “ASSIGNMENTS”)
IN CLASS: Quiz 3
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 5:
September 23
TOPIC: Feature writing
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 5: News Media Writing: Feature Writing

September 25
IN CLASS: GUEST SPEAKER (for News Release A)
IN CLASS: Quiz 4
IN CLASS: Write speech news release.
DUE BY NOON FRIDAY, SEPT. 26: NEWS RELEASE A (VIA CANVAS “ASSIGNMENTS”)

Week 6:
September 30
TOPIC: Photographic composition, writing captions
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 9: Digital Photography and Photographic Editing
DUE: DRAFT OF AG STORY 1 (TWO TYPED copies for peer review on Thursday.)

October 2
IN CLASS: Peer critique of Ag Story 1.
IN CLASS: Administer MBTI
IN CLASS: Quiz 5

Week 7:
October 7
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 1: Introduction to Agricultural Communications
WEB: Harvesting the Power of Farm Broadcasting: Chapter 6: The Farmer Demographic
      Harvesting the Power of Farm Broadcasting: Chapter 9: Media Use By Farmers
      Harvesting the Power of Farm Broadcasting: Chapter 10: Farm Media Research Studies
IN CLASS: Quiz MAKE-UP
DUE BY 12:50 p.m. TUESDAY, OCT. 7: AG STORY 1 (VIA CANVAS “ASSIGNMENTS”)

SECTION 2: CLD CAREERS AND GENERAL COMMUNICATION

October 9
TOPIC: Resumes, cover letters, personal statements
WEB: 70+ Most Artistic and Creative Resumes of All Time
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 4: Business Communication
TOPIC: Ag media
DUE THIS WEEK: Schedule meeting with Dr. Telg or TA to discuss Ag Story 1 and News Release A and to pitch idea for Ag Story 2.

Week 8:
October 14
CANVAS—Module 10: Careers in Communication and Leadership Development/Growing Grassroots
WEB: Communication and Leadership Development Graduates Jobs
      Colleges Not Training Students for Careers That are Growing
      USDA Employment Outlook 2010-15
      Employment Opportunities for Education, Communication and Governmental Services
      Outcomes: Salaries and Employer Information

October 16
EXAM 1

Week 9:
October 21
IN CLASS: “Open” class time for students to meet w/ instructors about Ag Story 1 and/or News Release A
AND STORY PITCH for Ag Story 2

October 23
TOPIC: CLD CAREER PANEL (for NEWS RELEASE B)
DUE BY 12:50 p.m. THURSDAY, OCT 23: REWRITE OF AG STORY 1 and/or NEWS RELEASE A (VIA CANVAS “ASSIGNMENTS”)
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 10:
October 28
TOPIC: Portfolios, e-portfolios
WEB: Portfolio Tips

October 30
TOPIC: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and communication
IN CLASS: Communication/Personality Styles Assessment
DUE BY NOON FRIDAY, OCT. 31: NEWS RELEASE B (VIA CANVAS “ASSIGNMENTS”)

Week 11:
November 4
TOPIC: Mass communication, mediated vs. unmediated channels, communication theories
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 2: Effective Communication and Message Development

November 6
TOPIC: Communicating via social media
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 12: New Media
DUE: “SPEED READ”

Week 12:
November 11
HOLIDAY!!!!!!!!!!!

November 13
TOPIC: CLD CAREER PANEL (for NEWS RELEASE C)
DUE BY NOON FRIDAY, NOV. 14: NEWS RELEASE C (VIA CANVAS “ASSIGNMENTS”)

Week 13:
November 18
TOPIC: Online presence, media in the workplace
WEB: Future Doctors Share too Much on Facebook
Survey Shows Colleges Consult Facebook in Admissions Process

November 20
TOPIC: Resume workshop and peer critique of Ag Story 2
IN CLASS: Peer critique resumes and Ag Story 2
DUE: DRAFT OF AG STORY 2 (TWO TYPED copies for peer review TODAY.)
DUE: DRAFT OF RESUME, COVER LETTER, JOB DESCRIPTION (TWO TYPED copies for peer review TODAY.)

Week 14:
November 25
TOPIC: Media relations
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 13: Media Relations
WEB: Interview Preparation Guide and Checklist
VIDEO: Getting News in the News
DUE BY 12:50 p.m. TUESDAY, NOV. 25: FINAL VERSION OF AG STORY 2 (VIA CANVAS “ASSIGNMENTS”)
DUE BY 12:50 p.m. TUESDAY, NOV. 25: FINAL VERSION OF RESUME ASSIGNMENT (VIA CANVAS “ASSIGNMENTS”)

November 27
HOLIDAY!!!!!!!!!!!
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 15:

December 2
TOPIC: Public relations
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 17: Communications Campaign Development
VIDEO: Public Relations

December 4
TOPIC: Organizational and business communication (letters, e-mail, memos)
TEXTBOOK: Chapter 4: Business Communication
WEB: Hershey’s letter
DUE IN CLASS: E-PORTFOLIO

Week 16:

December 9
EXAM 2