

**AEC 4031**  
**The Communication Process**  
**in Agricultural and Life Sciences**  
**§ 9067 Syllabus, Fall 2017**



**Dr. Linda M. Perry**

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**AEC 4031 The Communication Process in Agricultural and Life Sciences** focuses on strategic communication for agricultural and life science industries. Students can hone their writing skills and gain experience in effective professional writing and mediated communication. Emphasis is placed on ethics, responsibility, accuracy, clarity, brevity and style as well as American English grammar and spelling.

**Course objectives** are to enable students to (1) communicate strategically with specific target audiences on behalf of organizations in agricultural and life sciences; (2) communicate to lay publics about science topics and issues; (3) write effectively for a variety of media outlets; (4) write for a variety of audiences using clear, concise and effective prose with accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation; (5) think critically and communicate objectively and persuasively about issues in agriculture and life sciences; and (6) prepare for careers and leadership in agricultural communication.

**Class information:** AEC 4031 meets **T** 7th (1:55 p.m.) in Rolfs 115 and **R** 6-7<sup>th</sup> (12:50-2:45 p.m.) in Rolfs 205.

**Instructor:** Dr. Linda M. Perry • [lperry@ufl.edu](mailto:lperry@ufl.edu) • (352) 273-0749 • 122 Bryant Space Science Center.  
**Office hours:** **M:** 12:45-3 p.m.; **W:** 1:40-3 p.m.; **F:** 10:40 a.m.-2 p.m. and by appointment.

**Textbook:**

- Telg, R. & T.A. Irani. *Agricultural Communications in Action*. Clifton Park, N.Y.: Cengage Learning. ISBN:13: 9781111317140.
- *Associated Press Stylebook 2015 and Briefing on Media Law* (or later). Associated Press.

**Recommended:**

- Stovall, James Glen, *Writing for the Mass Media, 8th ed.*, Pearson (2014).
- L. Faigley (2012), *The Brief Penguin Handbook with Exercises 4<sup>th</sup> ed.*, Boston: Longman.

**Other materials:** In addition to the course materials on Canvas, lecture outlines and assignment instructions will be posted on the class website: <http://lindaperry.us/aec4031>. The lecture notes are *not* a substitution for attending class.

**Class expectations:** The instructor is committed to helping you improve your writing and critical thinking skills. To that end, **you can expect** constructive feedback on your writing assignments and opportunities to apply that feedback with **rewrites for four of the assignments**. The rewrites can help you improve both your writing and your scores for those assignments.

**I expect** punctual attendance, collegial class participation, on-time submission of assignments and honest effort. You may take notes on a laptop, but please don't distract yourself and others with personal uses. Please mute your cellphones and don't let them become a distraction.

**Assignments:** An important part of professional and research writing is meeting deadlines. Therefore, **late work** is penalized 10% of the available points for that assignment *per day* unless you have a documented, excused absence. You must notify Dr. Perry two weeks in advance and provide documentation for any UF-approved activity.

You will **submit assignments electronically** in Microsoft Word via Canvas, unless otherwise specified in class. **Rewrites**, when available, can help you earn back up to half the points you missed on the draft and must be submitted **within one week** after the graded assignment is returned to you. **Late rewrites will not be accepted. You are responsible** for submitting assignments correctly, assuring they have uploaded successfully and checking Canvas for *returned* assignments.

If English is your second language, you may seek specialized help in the UF Writing Studio: <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/for-students/esl-assistance/>

Assignments, <i>cont.</i> :	Assignments	Due Date	Word Count	Points Available
	1. Letter of Introduction	Sept. 10	400	50
	* 2. Pitch Letter (R)	Sept. 24	500	75
	* 3. Press Release (R)	Oct. 15	500	100
	4. Cover Letter and Résumé	Oct. 22	700	100
	* 5. PSA	Oct. 29	300	50
	* 6. Article on Science Topic (R)	Nov. 5	500	100
	* 7. Web Article & Tweet	Nov. 19	400	50
	* 8. Article for AEC/CALS (R)	Nov. 26	500	100
	* 9. Advocacy Feature, Science Issue	Dec. 5	800	100
	* 10. Issue Management Report	Dec. 12	1,000	100
	<i>AP Style Quiz</i>	<i>Sept. 28</i>	----	50
	<i>Journalistic Writing Exercises</i>	<i>Oct. 5</i>	<u>400</u>	50
	<i>Agency Work/Class Participation</i>			<u>100</u>
	<b>Totals</b>		<b>6,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>

(R) = Rewrite available



\* Potential portfolio piece

### Grading:

Your assignments are graded according to course rubrics. If you have questions or concerns about your grade, please **speak with the grader first *within one week*** of the assignment's being returned to you, before appealing to Dr. Perry.

The number of points you earn will determine your final grade. To receive Writing Rule credit, you must earn a C (730 points) or better. **The grading scale** follows:

<b>A</b>	950 to 1000	<b>C</b>	730 to 769
<b>A-</b>	900 to 949	<b>C-</b>	700 to 729
<b>B+</b>	870 to 899	<b>D+</b>	670 to 699
<b>B</b>	830 to 869	<b>D</b>	630 to 669
<b>B-</b>	800 to 829	<b>D-</b>	600 to 629
<b>C+</b>	770 to 799	<b>E</b>	599 & Below

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

**Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty is expected, just as high ethical standards are required professionally. There will be zero-tolerance for anything less. That includes not giving, accepting or taking unauthorized aid, including looking at colleagues' exam answers; plagiarizing websites or others' **or your own previous work**; or doubling on assignments without permission of all involved professors and instructors.

**Plagiarizing** includes taking **verbatim phrases of more than a few words** without full attribution. Violations will be pursued according to university guidelines. Students should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean, Student Honor Council, or Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution in the [Dean of Students Office](#).

**More on plagiarism** is on page 4 of this syllabus.

### Attendance:

**To succeed in this course, you must come to class.** You are responsible for all information delivered in class, including information for the exam and assignments that does not appear in the lecture notes. Make-up exams and assignment-deadline extensions are granted only in cases of *documented* excused absences.

**Special Needs:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the [Dean of Students Office](#). It is the *student's responsibility* to assure the appropriate documentation is delivered to the instructor. More instructions are available on page 4 of this syllabus.

**Reading & Assignment Schedule:**

- Chapter (Ch.) readings are from the textbook; AP readings are from the 2015 AP Stylebook.
- Handouts will be posted on the class website and/or in Canvas

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
I • Aug. 22	Introduction • Issues in Agriculture • Letters	Ch. 1, 3; One Sheet Wonder
II • Aug. 29	Writing Well • Writing Styles • Grammar	Ch. 2; AP A-D & 297-306
III • Sept. 5	Grammar, <i>cont.</i> • Strategic Communication <b>DUE Sept. 10:</b> Letter to instructor	Ch. 4: pp 58-59 AP E-L & 307-320
IV • Sept. 12	Writing for Media • Media Relations	Ch. 5, 13, 4; AP M-Q & 511
V • Sept. 19	Interviewing <b>*DUE Sept. 24:</b> Pitch Letter	Ch. 5: pp 77-79; AP R-Z
VI • Sept. 26	AP Style • News Leads <b>In Class Sept. 28:</b> AP Style Quiz	
VII • Oct. 3	News Writing Exercises • Press Releases <b>In Class Oct. 5:</b> Journalistic Writing Exercise	Handout: Canvas Files
VIII • Oct. 10	Careers: Cover Letters & Résumés <b>DUE Oct. 15:</b> Press Release	Ch. 11-12; AP 379-389
IX • Oct. 17	Science Communication • PSAs <b>* DUE Oct 22:</b> Cover Letter & Résumé	Ch. 9-10
X • Oct. 24	Persuasive Communication <b>* DUE Oct. 29:</b> PSA	Ch. 14
XI • Oct. 31	Writing News Features <b>* DUE Nov. 5:</b> Article on Science Topic	Ch.15
XII • Nov 7	Issues Management • Writing for Web, Social Media	Ch. 7
XIII • Nov. 14	Communication Law & Ethics <b>* DUE Nov. 19:</b> Web Article & Tweet	Ch. 15
XIV • Nov. 21	Agency Work Thanksgiving Nov. 22-24: <b>NO CLASS</b> Nov. 23 <b>* DUE Nov. 26:</b> Article for AEC/CALS	
XV • Nov. 28	Agency Work <b>* DUE Dec. 5:</b> Advocacy Feature on Science Issue	
XVI • Dec. 5	Agency Work	
Finals Week	<b>DUE Dec. 12:</b> Issues Management Report*	



\* **Potential portfolio pieces**

**Rewrites** are due *one week* from the date the assignment is returned to you. You are responsible for checking Canvas for returned assignments.

**The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary. The latest revision will be at <http://lindaperry.us/aec4031syllabus.htm>**

## Plagiarism and Copyright

When writing for science and business, we base our work on **facts** obtained from a variety of sources. We can freely use factual information from the public domain. We cite our sources so others can access the information we present. We give credit where it is due. When we use others' *unique expression* of that information, we are very careful to adhere to high ethical and legal standards. *Unique expression* can be a phrase of only a few words or a simple hashtag. We must obtain permission to use our sources' *expression*, or give full credit for a limited, fair use.

- Relevant **copyright law** requirements will be discussed in class.
- Assignments submitted via Canvas are automatically vetted for **plagiarism** with Turnitin.

## UF Academic Honesty, Software Use, Campus Helping Resources, Services for Students with Disabilities

### *Academic Honesty*

In 1995 the UF student body enacted an **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.

The **Honor Pledge**: “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.”

Students should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean, Student Honor Council, or Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution in the Dean of Students Office. (Source: 2013-2014 Undergraduate Catalog, <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>)

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.

### *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. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems, lacking clear career or academic goals, or experiencing other problems that may interfere with their academic performance.

**University Counseling & Wellness Center**, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, [www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/)

Counseling Services	Groups and Workshops
Outreach and Consultation	Self-Help Library
Training Programs	Community Provider Database

**Career Resource Center**, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, [www.crc.ufl.edu/](http://www.crc.ufl.edu/)

**Services for Students with Disabilities**, 0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)

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.