AEC 4031
THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS IN AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

Fall 2020 Syllabus
About your instructor

Contact Information:

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1200 North Park Road
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By appointment

Kati Lawson
Lecturer
About your teaching assistant

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Jacqueline Aenlle
Ph.D. student
About this class

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 help you transition to the professional level.
This course will help you expand your writing experience, strengthen and refine your communication skills, and raise your level of professional performance. 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 Materials

Textbooks:

- *Associated Press Stylebook* (2018 edition or newer)
# Evaluation of Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Quizzes/Article (Points based on effort/completion, not knowledge scores)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments (including drafts and rewrites)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Style Quizzes</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
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Evaluation of Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A = 93 – 100%</th>
<th>B- = 80 – 82.99%</th>
<th>D+ = 66 – 69.99%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A- = 90 – 92.99%</td>
<td>C+ = 76 – 79.99%</td>
<td>D = 63 – 65.99%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ = 86 – 89.99%</td>
<td>C = 73 – 75.99%</td>
<td>D- = 60 – 62.99%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B = 83 – 85.99%</td>
<td>C- = 70 – 72.99%</td>
<td>E = below 60%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Unless otherwise noted, every component will be evaluated on 100 points. Your final grade for the course will be calculated on the previous percentages, which will then lead to your final letter grade as based on the following scale:

*Note: For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see [https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx)*
Extra Credit

Keep an eye out for extra-credit opportunities, they are offered sporadically throughout the semester. Also, take advantage of re-writes. They are not required, but are opportunities to improve your overall grade.
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.
Policies & Guidelines for Success

Professionalism – The reality of this field is that people judge you by how you present yourself. Your use of language, the clarity of your speaking and your general appearance and professional bearing will shape the opinions of those who are listening to you. I will also grade you on the basis of the facts you assemble, the astuteness of your analysis of the problem and the soundness of your recommendations.

Late Assignment Policy: Late work WILL NOT be accepted without proper documentation. A paper turned in 30 minutes past the assigned time is considered one day late. (If an assignment is due at 11:59 p.m., and it is turned in at 12:30 a.m., it is one day late and will receive a grade of zero.)
Policies & Guidelines for Success

Important Notes about Writing:

Fact Errors: You are responsible for checking the facts of your story before you submit it, including contacting your sources and having them approve 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 content to Web pages, so do not use content from Web pages in your assignments. You will not be able to use prior assignments for this class. “Copying” your own work is also plagiarism. 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

You will receive a ZERO grade for any assignment that you plagiarize, and possibly dismissed 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.
To be successful in today’s world, it is critical that you write well. As such, your grade for each aspect of this course will be based on the quality of your thinking and writing. All assignments should be free of inaccuracies, weak thinking, typos, spelling errors and grammatical problems. Never turn in a first draft.

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...

- Not using “tweet-talk” in your assignments.
- Making sure that your sentences have a subject, verb, and (when needed) an object.
- Not having sentence fragments.
- And anything else that would pertain to “proper sentence structure.”
Policies & Guidelines for Success

AEC Expectations for Writing

No use of first person (I, me, my, mine, our) unless denoted within the assignment rubric (this is generally okay for discussion posts).

Good thoughts/content throughout the writing assignment.

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.
AEC Expectations for Design:

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 design software in order to complete design assignments.
LinkedIn Learning

The University of Florida has an agreement with LinkedIn Learning 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 tutorials: http://www.it.ufl.edu/training/
Academic Integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code (https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code/student-conduct-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.
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 Health and Wellness and Academic Resources can be found below:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx), 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

[http://www.police.ufl.edu/](http://www.police.ufl.edu/)
Campus Helping Resources

**Academic Resources**

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu. [https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml](https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml). Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. [http://www.crc.ufl.edu/](http://www.crc.ufl.edu/) Library Support, [http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask). Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center. General study skills and tutoring. [http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/](http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/)

Writing Studio. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. [http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/)
Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.
Course Add/Drop

Courses may be dropped or added during the Drop/Add period without penalty. The Drop/Add period is the first five days of classes during fall or spring semester, and the first two days of classes for summer terms. The specific dates are listed in each term's academic calendar.

After Drop/Add, students may withdraw from a course up to the date established in the university calendar. A grade of W will appear on the transcript, and students will be held liable for course fees. All drops after Drop/Add must be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar by the deadline.
Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/.
Final Thought

I want you to be successful in this class, and I will do my best to help you succeed. I am happy to help you address any challenges you face this semester; please visit me during office hours to discuss any concerns or challenges.
## Course Schedule (see Canvas modules for details)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of Aug. 31 – Course overview</th>
<th>Week of Oct. 19 – Becoming a wordsmith: How to choose the right words when you write</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week of Sept. 7 – Introduction to agricultural communication</td>
<td>Week of Oct. 26 – Becoming an editor of your own work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of Sept. 14 – Effective communication and message development</td>
<td>Week of Nov. 2 – Media Relations: Writing for the media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of Sept. 21 – Journalism Breakdown: Where does news come from?</td>
<td>Week of Nov. 9 – Writing for SEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of Sept. 28 – Using journalism principles to analyze media</td>
<td>Week of Nov. 16 – Writing for auditory audiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of Oct. 5 – AP Style</td>
<td>Week of Nov. 23 – Thanksgiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of Oct. 12 – Asking the right questions: Interview Skills</td>
<td>Week of Nov. 30 &amp; Dec. 7 – Course Wrap-Up</td>
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