

AEC 4031: The Communication Process in Agricultural and Life Sciences

Fall 2021

Instructor:

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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 help you transition to the professional level.

Objectives: 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 Textbook: Students are expected to read and watch assigned materials and be prepared for discussion with the instructor and fellow students.

- *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual, 2019 or 2020 edition* by the Associated Press. Online version of AP Stylebook is available at <https://store.stylebooks.com/apstylebookonline.html>.

Class Format: Class will be delivered completely online.

Dr. Lawson and Jacqueline are available by appointment.

Please allow 24 hours for email responses.

ing Scale (in %):

Grading Scale

A	93-100	C	73-75.99
A-	90-92.99	C-	70-72.99
B+	86-89.99	D+	66-69.99
B	83-85.99	D	63-65.99
B-	80-82.99	D-	60-62.99
C+	76-79.99	E	Below 60%



For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

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.



Week of	Class Topic	Due this Week	Notes
8/24	Course Overview		
8/31	Intro to Ag Com		
9/7	Effective Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>Diagnostic Article</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
9/14	Journalism Breakdown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
9/21	Analyze Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>News Feature Topic</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
9/28	AP Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>Rank King</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
10/5	Asking the Right Questions: Interview Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>AP Scavenger Hunt</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
10/12	Becoming a Wordsmith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>Headline and Lead</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
10/19	Edit Your Own Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>Word Choice</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
10/26	Feature Story Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>Catch the Edit</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
11/2	Writing for SEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>Edit a Feature</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
11/9	Copyediting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>SEO Article</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
11/16	Branding and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>Ghost Writing</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
11/23	Thanksgiving-No Class	No work due this week. Enjoy your break!	
11/30	Media Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>Press Release</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
12/7	Writing for Auditory Audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• <u>Pod Cast Script</u> •• Quiz •• Discussion Post 	
12/14	Final Exam Week		

*All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on Mondays unless otherwise stated.

The following assignments are eligible for a re-write opportunity: SEO Article, Press release, Feature Story. Re-writes are due one week after initial assignment due date and the higher score of the two submissions will be recorded.

Gordon Rule Writing Requirement: "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: 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.)***

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> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#). 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.

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.
- No use of first person (I, me, my, mine, our) unless denoted within the assignment rubric.
- Good thoughts/content throughout the writing assignment.
- For assignments that require citations, use American Psychological Association style. Proper APA citation and reference document are 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.



Plagiarism is not tolerated in this course. If plagiarism is suspected, you will be questioned by the instructor first and then your case will be processed according to UF guidelines. Check out <https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/copyright/plagiarism> for more information.

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.

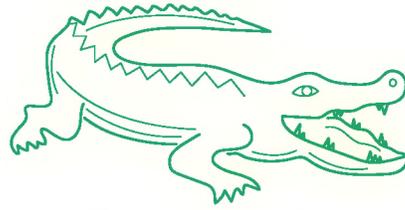
- Proper grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure are mandatory. Although these are design assignments, writing has to be perfect so as not to detract from the design. For assignments that feature more reporter-style articles (news stories, news releases, public relations writing), you are expected 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 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.

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.**



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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 an 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)*

We are an engaged community of diverse students and faculty.

We learn to think critically and dialogue about agricultural and natural resources issues facing Florida and our world.

We explore the varied perspectives, theories and science underlying these issues.

We build our communication and leadership skills to address evolving agricultural and natural resources issues in a multicultural society.

Work Expectations: 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/ ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#).

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
- Career Resource Center, CR-100 JWRU, 392-1602, www.crc.ufl.edu/
- Student Mental Health Services, Rm. 245 Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, www.shcc.ufl.edu/smhs/
 - Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)
 - Center for Sexual Assault / Abuse Recovery & Education (CARE)
 - Eating Disorders Program
 - Employee Assistance Program
 - Suicide Prevention Program