The Communication Process in Agricultural and Life Sciences 

AEC4031

Fall 2025 – 3 Credits

# Instructor

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# Teaching Assistant

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# Class Times Location

Thursday 1:55-4:55 Turlington 2349

# Course Description

Effective communication is at the heart of a 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. This writing course prepares students to effectively present extended analyses and sophisticated ideas (more information at <https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-courses/structure-of-wr-courses/wr-course-guidelines/>).

# Course Objectives

To be successful in your career, you need to be able to get what’s in your head onto paper in a compelling and persuasive manner. Following completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Select topics
2. Develop hard news articles, press releases, and feature stories
3. Effectively structure your thoughts in writing
4. Write with your audience, purpose and context in mind
5. Maintain fairness
6. Interview information sources
7. Analyze and edit your own work and the work of others
8. Recognize and attend to the unique challenges of science writing
9. Communicate using accepted conventions of standard written English

Course objectives include general education objectives as detailed at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-programs/general-education/#objectivesandoutcomestext>

# Course Design

This is an in-person course. Students are expected to attend all class sessions unless otherwise excused.

# Writing Requirement

As a general education writing requirement, students will write at least 6000 words in this course. The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

To facilitate writing improvement throughout the course, prompt feedback will be provided on all assignments, and all feedback will be provided before the end of the semester. Feedback will include comments and instruction on grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. Writing assessment rubrics are provided in Canvas by assignment.

# Additional Requirements

## Textbook:

None

## Technology:

To succeed in this course, you must have access to the following technology **IN CLASS**:

* **Laptop computer**
* Microsoft Word - [Microsoft 365 basics video training](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsupport.microsoft.com%2Fen-us%2Foffice%2Fmicrosoft-365-basics-video-training-396b8d9e-e118-42d0-8a0d-87d1f2f055fb&data=05%7C01%7Cbrooke.brammer%40ufl.edu%7Cfa687a99f8814d9457ff08db03a74f10%7C0d4da0f84a314d76ace60a62331e1b84%7C0%7C0%7C638107789339169026%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=TLW6NUAxqahJlebtSJzmI6gGZFi5bvKksQmj7nOsgPA%3D&reserved=0)

# Instructor Response & Feedback

The instructor and TA are committed to responding to your Canvas and email messages within 24 hours when feasible during the work week, Monday through Friday, *except holidays*. The instructor also holds office hours each week. The major assignments will be graded, with meaningful feedback provided, typically within one week of their submission.

# Assignments

## Reading & Assignment Schedule:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignments Due** |
| 1 | 8/21 | News writing |  |
| 2 | 8/28 | Evidence and sources | Hard news planning |
| 3 | 9/4 | Headlines, leads, and the rest |  |
| 4 | 9/11 | Press releases | Hard news article |
| 5 | 9/18 | Wordsmithing and editing | Press release planning |
| 6 | 9/25 | Interviews | *Rewrite*: Hard news article |
| 7 | 10/2 | Feature writing part 1 | Press release |
| 8 | 10/9 | Wordsmithing and editing | Feature planning |
| 9 | 10/16 | Feature writing part 2 | Interview prep for feature article 2*Rewrite*: Press release |
| 10 | 10/23 | AP Style |  |
| 11 | 10/30 | Wordsmithing and editing | Feature article 1: Issue |
| 12 | 11/6 | TBA | Interview recording |
| 13 | 11/13 | Bias and fairness | *Rewrite*: Feature article 1 |
| 14 | 11/20 | Wrap up | Feature article 2: Person profile |
| 15 | 11/27 | Thanksgiving, no class |  |
| 16 | 12/1 | Reading day, no class | *Rewrite*: Feature article 2 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assignment | % of Final Grade |
| Hard news article  | 12% |
| Press release  | 12% |
| Interview recording | 12% |
| Feature article 1: Issue | 12% |
| Feature article 2: Person profile | 12% |
| Planning assignments (3) | 20% |
| Attendance, participation, and reading quizzes | 20% |
| Total | **100%** |

### Rewrites

You will have the opportunity to resubmit the four largest assignments (hard news article, press release, and feature articles) to regain 50% of the points deducted in the original submission.

## Assignment Explanation:

*Hard news planning*. In this assignment you will develop a plan to guide your writing for the hard news assignment that follows. You will identify a newsworthy topic and audience, then research the five Ws and one H. Approximate words: 500. SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10

*Hard news article*. Using the information assembled in the previous assignment and additional research, you will develop a hard news story. The story will must follow the inverted pyramid structure. Approximate words: 500. SLOs: 2, 3, 6, 8, 9

*Press release planning*. In preparation for your press release assignment, you select a topic and gather necessary information. Approximate words: 500. SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9

*Press release*. In this assignment, you will prepare a press release to draw media attention to an organization of your choosing. Press release formatting must be used, along with the inverted pyramid structure. Approximate words: 500. SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9

*Feature planning*. This assignment begins your planning for two feature stories. You will select topics, conduct research, and plan your story structure. Approximate words: 500. SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9

*Interview prep for feature article 2*. In preparation for your feature assignment, you must develop interview questions for your potential sources. Approximate words: 300. SLOs: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9

*Interview recording*. You will submit a recording of your interview. SLOs: 2, 5, 6, 8

*Feature article 1: Issue*. In this assignment, you will write a feature-style story on an issue. Approximate words: 900. SLOs: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9

*Feature article 2: Person profile*. In this assignment, you will write a feature-style story on the person you interviewed. Approximate words: 900. SLOs: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9

*Attendance, participation, and reading quizzes.*

You will receive a daily grade based on your attendance, participation, attentiveness, and a reading quiz. The lowest two daily grades will be dropped. If you have excused absence beyond the two drops, you may write a one-page single-spaced reflection paper on the course content for the missed day for a chance at full points (due before next class period).

## Course Grading:

Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must be typed and submitted in the required format to receive full credit.

*Late submissions:* Unless otherwise stated or agreed upon, late submissions will be penalized as follows
-10% if between 1 minute and 24 hours late
-20% if 24 to 48 hours late
-30% if 48 to 72 hours late
Not accepted if more than 72 hours late

### 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% | F = Below 60% |

Further information about UF grading policies can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

# Use of Artificial Intelligence

Use of generative artificial intelligence is not permitted without written permission from the instructor. Use of generative artificial intelligence (including but not limited to Chat GPT) without permission, could result in a grade penalty. The university policy on plagiarism and the Honor Code applies to the use of artificial intelligence.

# University-Wide Policies and Student Support Services

As part of the updated University of Florida Syllabus Policy, this course syllabus refers students to a central online resource that contains the most current university-wide academic policies and student support services. Using this shared link helps ensure that all students receive accurate, consistent, and up-to-date information.

Students are expected to visit and review the centralized UF Syllabus Policy page at: [UF Syllabus Policy](https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/). Throughout the term, students are strongly encouraged to return to this page regularly to stay updated on important university expectations and explore available resources. The page includes information on topics such as:

Academic Policies

* Attendance requirements and make-up work procedures
* Academic accommodations for students with disabilities
* Grading standards and grade point policies
* Course evaluation instructions and portals
* Student Honor Code and University Honesty Policy
* Guidelines governing the recording and use of class lectures

Academic Resources

* E-learning support and technology assistance
* Career and counseling services (Career Connections Center)
* Library access and help services
* Study skills support and tutoring (Teaching Center)
* Writing support (Writing Studio)
* Complaint procedures and academic grievance resources
* UF Student Success Initiative resources

Campus Health & Wellness

* Physical, mental, and emotional health services
* Safety and support programs
* UF Whole Gator wellness tools