

The Communication Process in Agricultural and Life Sciences



AEC4031

Fall 2024 – 3 Credits



AGRICULTURAL
EDUCATION AND
COMMUNICATION

Instructor

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Class Times

Thursday 1:55-4:55

Location

Leigh Hall 142

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](#)

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	Jan 16	News writing	
2	Jan 23	Evidence and sources	Hard news planning
3	Jan 30	Headlines, leads, and the rest	
4	Feb 6	Press releases	Hard news article
5	Feb 13	Wordsmithing and editing	Press release planning
6	Feb 20	Interviews	<i>Rewrite:</i> Hard news article
7	Feb 27	Feature writing part 1	Press release
8	Mar 6	Wordsmithing and editing	Feature planning
9	Mar 13	Feature writing part 2	Interview prep for feature article 2 <i>Rewrite:</i> Press release
10	Mar 20	Spring break	
11	Mar 27	AP Style	Feature article 1: Issue
12	Apr 3	Wordsmithing and editing	Interview recording
13	Apr 10	Bias and fairness	<i>Rewrite:</i> Feature article 1
14	Apr 17	Wrap up	Feature article 2: Person profile
15	Apr 24	Reading day, no class	
16	May 1	Exam week, no class	<i>Rewrite:</i> 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/>

Academic Integrity

UF's Academic Honesty Statement:

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following 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."*** You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit 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."***

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g., assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean or Student Honor Court. **It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code.** Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: [UF Student Code of Conduct Webpage](#).

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism includes taking **verbatim phrases of just a few words** without permission or full attribution. It includes **quoting too much** from your sources, thereby substituting their expression for your own, or quoting too much from one source, effectively taking more than a *fair use* of their work. **Over quoting (direct quotes)** comprising more than 10% of any assignment will be considered plagiarism. Plagiarism includes **unique expression**, which can be a phrase of a few words or a simple moniker. Our writing is mostly *our own expression*. When writing for science and business, we base our work on **facts** obtained from a variety of **credible sources**. We give credit where it is due. We **cite our sources** so others can access the information we present. When appropriate, we very carefully, ethically, and lawfully use others' expression of that information. We obtain permission to use our sources' expression or give full credit for a *limited, fair use*, including direct quotes.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

If you use artificial intelligence (including but not limited to Chat GPT) without permission, your grade could be penalized up to 100%. Exception: Use of [Grammarly](#) is permitted and encouraged.

Attendance Policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: [UF Attendance Policies](#).

Institutional Policies

Recording Statement

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. [UF IN-CLASS RECORDING](#)

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. [UF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY](#)

Course Evaluations

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email, they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

Student Services

Health & Wellness

- U Matter, We Care
 - If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center
 - Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
 - 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.
- Student Health Care Center
 - Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department
 - Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services
 - For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support
 - Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#)
 - Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#)
 - Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- [Teaching Center](#)
 - Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#)
 - 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Student Complaints On-Campus
 - Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.
- On-Line Students Complaints
 - View the [Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

Services for 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. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation 0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, [UF Disability Resource Center](#).
[Canvas Accessibility Standards](#)
[Zoom Accessibility Information](#)