

# Writing for Social Media

PBRL 3441-001

Spring 2021

MW 12:40 – 2:05 Remote Synchronous via Zoom

**Prof. Kim Marks Malone, APR, Fellow PRSA**

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Catalog description

Development of strategic writing skills to write effectively across various social media platforms with an emphasis on the need to tailor the message to both the audience and the platform through which it is communicated. Topics explored will include style, repurposing of content, specific requirements for various platforms, organizational voice, SEO and strategic message development.

### Prerequisites

None

### Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

- *Social Media for Strategic Communication*. Freberg, K. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-5063-8710-9.
- Other readings and supplemental materials will be assigned and posted to eCourseware.
- Access to social media accounts – either personal or newly opened for this class.

### Virtual Classroom format

This class will use Zoom, a web-based video conferencing platform. All students will be in class synchronously via Zoom. You must have a stable internet connection, speakers and a microphone (or a headset with a built-in mic). You don't need to have your video turned on for the entirety of class, but I do ask that you have it on at the beginning and whenever you are speaking.

### Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Spring 2021 course list available to you, click on the link for PBRL 3441-001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

## GRADING AND COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

This is meant as a general guideline to the major assignments within the class. More detail will be provided in class and on eCourseware. Deadlines will be listed on each assignment. All work should be

turned in as a Word document via Dropbox in eCourseware unless otherwise noted.

**Blog posts (various deadlines), 15%.** One of the more established forms of online media among PR professionals are blogs. Blog content is often posted on LinkedIn and repurposed across various other social media platforms. For this semester, you will be creating your own blog posts using the discussion board. You will be asked to write posts relevant to course material, current events related to social media in the industry and other topics as assigned. Blog posts should average 250 – 300 words.

**Content creation assignments (various deadlines), 15%.** Assignments meant to practice concepts and skills covered in readings and class discussions.

**Personal branding assignments (various deadlines), 10%.** Assignments meant to help you audit and build your personal brand on social media as a new PR professional.

**Social media snapshot (rolling deadlines), 10%.** You will each select a social media platform to research and will do a 5 – 8 min. presentation and workshop on the platform to the class.

**Final social media content campaign (Monday, May 3), 30%.** The final assignment is the course’s ultimate application of the principles you’ve learned. You each will develop a straw-man social media campaign for a local small business or nonprofit that includes developing all of the content for the appropriate social media platforms for the organization.

**Quizzes (various deadlines). 15%.** There will be weekly quizzes on eCourseware. Quizzes must be completed by Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. (CST).

**Participation & attendance, 5%.** You are expected to be present and participate in every scheduled class.

### Grading

Blog posts	15%
Content creation assignments	15%
Personal branding assignments	10%
Social media snapshot	10%
Final social media content campaign	30%
Quizzes	15%
Participation & attendance	5%

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4% B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4%  
C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4% D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4% F 0-59.4%

**Grading Philosophy.** A=Professional quality work that could be use with little or no modification; B=Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement, but would require revision to be used professionally; C=Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement, but would need significant revision; D=Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality; F=Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirement.

## Other issues

**Contacting me.** The best and quickest way to contact me is via email ([ksmarks@memphis.edu](mailto:ksmarks@memphis.edu)). Do not use the email within eCourseware, use my Memphis.edu email. I will respond to email with 24 – 48 hours. If you have a problem, do not let it snowball. Contact me ASAP.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is tentative and subject to change. Additional details on readings, supplemental materials and assignments will be provided via eCourseware.

### *Week 1, Jan. 20: Introduction to social media*

Chapter 1 Introduction to social media: An art and science (Freberg)

### *Week 2, Jan. 25 & 27: Social media ethical & legal considerations*

Chapter 2 Ethical and legal fundamentals in social media (Freberg)

### *Week 3, Feb. 1 & 3: Using social media for personal & professional branding*

Chapter 3 Personal and professional branding (Freberg)

### *Week 4, Feb. 8 & 10: Research in social media*

Chapter 5 Research in social media: Monitoring, listening and analysis (Freberg)

Wednesday, Feb. 10 – Social media snapshot presentation 1

### *Week 5, Feb. 15 & 17: Social media strategic planning*

Chapter 6 Strategic planning for social media (Freberg)

Wednesday, Feb. 17 – Social media snapshot presentation 2

### *Week 6, Feb. 22 & 24: Strategic writing for social media*

Chapter 7 Strategic writing for social media (Freberg)

Wednesday, Feb. 24 – Social media snapshot presentation 3

### *Week 7, March 1 & 3: Find your audience on social media*

Chapter 8 Audience segmentation and analysis (Freberg)

Wednesday, March 3 – Social media snapshot presentation 4

### *Week 8, March 10 & 14: No class*

No class this week

### *Week 9, March 15 & 17: Social media content*

Chapter 9 Creating, managing, and curating content (Freberg)

Wednesday, March 17 – Happy St. Patrick's Day + social media snapshot presentation 5

### *Week 10, March 22 & 24: What does success look like on social media?*

Chapter 10 Measurement, evaluation, budget and calendar (Freberg)

Wednesday, March 24 – Social media snapshot presentation 6

*Week 11, March 29 & 31: The final project*

Reading TBD

Wednesday, March 31 – Social media snapshot presentation 7

*Week 12, April 5 & 7: Writing for Facebook and Instagram*

Reading TBD

*Week 13, April 12 & 14: Writing for LinkedIn and Twitter*

Reading TBD

*Week 14, April 19 & 21: Using Snapchat & TikTok for PR*

Reading TBD

*Week 15, April 26: Wrap-Up*

**Note: Last day of classes is Tuesday, April 27**

*Monday, May 3: Final assignment due*

## ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

### Five Pillars in PBRL 3441

- *Critical Thinking:* Students must demonstrate an understanding of the audience for each social media platform and explain how the selected platform will further the organization's goals.
- *Media Literacy:* Students learn how social media content is researched, planned and created through multiple content creation assignments.
- *Multimedia:* Students will prepare materials for multiple social media platforms that will include photography, video, audio and data visualization.
- *Professionalism:* Students learn the professional standards and routines of social media content creation, curation and management through multiple assignments as well as data literacy and the ethical and legal considerations of social media.
- *Writing:* Students develop appropriate audience-specific messages for different social media platforms.

### Professional values and competencies for PBRL 3441

- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.

- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

## How professional values and competencies will be met

### *Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)*

- Provide a conceptual overview and a systematic study of content creation, curation and management.
- Understand the importance of considering diversity, accessibility, and inclusiveness when planning social media campaigns and messaging.
- Interpret and apply principles of leadership to the special needs of social media managers and content creators.
- Foster professionalism in social media management, covering the knowledge base, theory, methodologies and ethics.

### *Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)*

- Select and apply appropriate research and project management tools in support of social media content creation, curation and management.
- Evaluate and critique social media campaigns and content.
- Plan and create content for a social media campaign.
- Work effectively in a group.

## How assessment of student learning will be met

### *Awareness*

- Learn about the important role of social media management and content creation in public relations

### *Understanding*

- Understand leadership management and the role social media writing and management plays in public relations practice
- Learn the basics of social media campaign finance and budget management
- Understand the different audiences found on various social media platforms and how to select an appropriate platform mix for a social media campaign to further an organization's goals.
- Study effective social media campaigns and messaging.

### *Application*

- Network with professionals in public relations and the community.
- Improve written and oral communication skills through written briefs, assessments, and presentations or reports.
- Complete researching, planning, and content creation for a social media campaign during the course of the semester.

- Gain experience creating effective social media messages.
- Learn about personal leadership style and determine areas of potential growth.
- Enhance leadership and organizational skills within a social media management role.

## JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

### Portfolio requirement

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 or JRSM 3905 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or SquareSpace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### Email

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

### Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

## Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g., with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

## Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

## Academic integrity

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas. Also, to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

## Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted

grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

### **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

### **AP Style and grammar**

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

### **Disability and accommodations**

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### **Diversity and inclusivity**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

### **Weather policy**

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the University is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day’s work.

### **Student support**

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

### **COVID-19 protocols for this course**



### **Student Accommodations**

Students with accessibility issues or learning accommodation issues due to a disability should contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to submit an official request for course accommodations. Contact DRS at 901.678.2880 or at [drs@memphis.edu](mailto:drs@memphis.edu). (<https://www.memphis.edu/drs/index.php>)

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly, through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class in addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the regular institutional disciplinary procedures. (<https://www.memphis.edu/osa/students/academic-misconduct.php>)

### **Student Health**

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@memphis.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@memphis.edu).

### **Student Resources**

Students who need additional resources can visit the Dean of Students Office website at <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>.

### **Guidelines for classes, labs and equipment in Meeman Journalism Building in Spring 2021**

- Anyone feeling sick should stay home and join class virtually.
- Social distance from all others at least 6 feet.
- Wear a mask at all times when in University buildings and on campus.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- No more than one person in the elevator at a time.
- Disinfect your workstation before and after use, including desks, keyboards, mice and screens. Wash your hands after cleaning.
- Have phone or Zoom meetings with professors and classmates. Do not meet face to face, if possible.