

Student Media Practicum | Daily Helmsman/DH.com

JRSM 4940-001/M50

Fall 2025

Meeting time to be determined; five hours per week

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Work in practical assignments at the student media organizations, The Daily Helmsman/DH.com.

Students must work at least 50 hours per credit hour during the semester, up to 6 credit hours.

NOTE: Students may earn no. more than 6 hours of credit for JRSM 4930 or JRSM 4940 in combination.

Course purpose

Daily Helmsman/DH.com is a student-run news organization that provides real-world experience producing and engaging with news. The Daily Helmsman/DH.com is the campus news source for the University of Memphis community. This course fulfills the requirement for practicum credit in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media and may count as credit toward other degrees as determined by the department/college.

Prerequisites

Permit required and you must have completed 45 credit hours.

Textbooks, software and required materials

- No textbook is required. All work should adhere to AP Style, so it is recommended that you have access to the [AP Stylebook online](#) or a hard copy of a current (last three years) Style Guide.

Time expectations

You are expected to work as hard as you would at an off-campus internship or job. **You must complete 150 hours over the semester for the three credits, and you must record and account for your time on weekly timesheets.**

Although 150 hours may sound daunting, it is easier to reach than you may think.

Importance of not falling behind on hours. An issue sometimes seen is the inability to fulfill the required number of hours by the end of the semester. This happens mainly due to procrastination, lack of initiative in suggesting additional client ideas/work or not communicating the need for additional work. The standard hours count per week is provided to help you exactly how much work you need to complete in the long run. Thus, if you fall behind one week, you should make up extra hours the next week – these issues will build over time.

Absences

Life happens. You may need to *occasionally* be absent from team meetings.. You are allowed three **unexcused** absences during the semester with no penalty. After the third **unexcused** absence, there will be at least one letter grade deduction from your final grade. No exceptions. Excused absences include family emergencies or documented illness and university-related activities (sports, class field trip, etc.).

If you need to be absent, communicate with your team *in advance* so everyone knows what's happening.

Professional expectations

Throughout the semester, you are expected to represent the University of Memphis professionally, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. You must report to team and client meetings on time. You will be graded on the quality of work you develop for our clients, the relationships you build with and on behalf of our clients, and your ability to meet deadlines.

Clear, concise, grammatically correct writing is essential. Remember to edit and proofread your writing/content before submitting, sharing with clients, or posting to the web or social media platforms. All social media content must be scheduled for review and approved before posting.

GRADING AND DELIVERABLES

We work for clients and don't use the term "assignments." Instead, the products that you complete are called "deliverables." Deliverables throughout the semester might include content calendars, social media content (posts, videos, photos, etc.), blogs, proposals, pitches, evaluations, etc.

You should be prepared for regular critiques of your work in agency meetings. Such critique is standard practice in all advertising and PR agencies. This collective critique facilitates everyone's mastery of the concepts and skills involved. There is *never* a team discussion of grades. You will each be graded individually on all work, and all work completed will be reviewed holistically.

Evaluations

At mid-term and the end of the semester, 360-degree evaluations will be completed to include peer, team lead, and firm director evaluations. Client evaluations will be done at the end of the semester or after client services, whichever comes first. These evaluations will be factored into your final grade. You are responsible for evaluating your teammates and team leads honestly, professionally, and on time.

Team participation

Since this is a work setting, please treat this as a job. You are expected to engage in discussions, participate in account/team meetings and activities, and to contribute meaningfully to team deliverables. This includes being prepared for discussions, asking meaningful questions, answering questions thoughtfully, responding thoughtfully to questions and comments, initiating relevant conversations, and active participation and engagement in all facets of the agency.

Original work

As strategic media professionals, our reputation is critical to our success. All work created for clients and agency activities must be original. Any evidence of plagiarism will result in an F for the project and potentially the practicum. It could also lead to disciplinary action at the department, college, and university levels.

AI use

You are permitted to use ChatGPT and other AI tools to assist you in gathering information and brainstorming ideas. Still, you may not copy and paste information directly from the AI tool and present it as your own. You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query and for assuring that it does not contain misinformation or unethical content and does not violate intellectual property laws. Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited appropriately.

Ultimately, your grade in this practicum will reflect your ability to learn and grow over the semester. Final grades will be assigned based on your overall performance to include (but not limited to) attendance, professionalism, completion of 150 hours, evaluations, course and client deliverables (quizzes, blogs, certifications, social media content, event planning, etc.), teamwork, and quality of work (error-free, on time).

Contacting me

The best and quickest way to contact me is email. Do not use the email in Canvas, use my memphis.edu. I will respond within 24 – 48 hours. You may also text me. If you text me, please include your name and your class. If you have a problem, do not let it snowball. Contact me ASAP.