

Student Media Practicum | Meeman 901 Strategies

JRSM 4940 M50 - Online Section

Fall 2025

Online students are welcome to attend any in-person Meeman 901 meetings should their schedule/location allow it, though it is not required. When possible, team meetings/work critiques will be recorded and shared with the online section of the course and can be watched for hours.

Prof. Taylor Ackerman, APR, MA

She/Her

Office hours: Mondays, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Tuesdays, 11 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Tuesdays, 2:30 - 3 p.m.

Wednesdays, 12 - 1 p.m.

Other times available by appointment! If you are wishing to meet during my office hours, please send me a text prior to arriving to confirm which office I'm in or receive a Teams link.

Email: tckerman@memphis.edu

Phone: 731-225-7656 Text only unless by appointment

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Work in practical assignments at student media organizations. Students must work at least 50 hours per credit hour, 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

Meeman 901 Strategies is a student-run agency that provides you with real-world experience working with real-world clients. Meeman 901 Strategies is a fully functioning strategic communication agency that 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. As a team member in Meeman 901 Strategies, you will either lead or participate within multiple account teams. This agency will handle a variety of tasks, included but not limited to social media content creation, social media account management and strategy, graphic design services, event planning, campaign development, earned media materials and copywriting.

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.
- Required reading: Meeman 901 Strategies Agency Handbook (fall 2025 edition) (*provided*). You are required to complete and return the Agency Handbook Acknowledgement Form the first week.
- Required tools:
 - **Canvas.** Client work will NOT be submitted to Canvas. You will submit your agency placement submissions, end-of-term practicum report, portfolio, and evaluations on Canvas. There may be other work assigned on Canvas throughout the semester.
 - Go to the University of Memphis learning management system home page: <https://memphis.instructure.com>
 - Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
 - On your course dashboard, click on the course card for Meeman 901 Strategies
 - **GroupMe.** Agency-wide messaging app. Routine messaging will be done in GroupMe. You will join Meeman 901's GroupMe during agency onboarding and be assigned to appropriate 'topics.' Responding in a timely manner to team and agency communication channels will be an expectation for professionalism and will contribute to your overall performance.
 - **Canva.** A free [Canva](#) account is recommended. You will use Canva for creating social media graphics and other client products. Products made via other design and editing tools are welcomed, however must be submitted to team channels via appropriate file types in order to be counted for hours. (.MP4 for video, .jpg for images, .png for designed graphics, .doc for word documents, etc.)
 - **Teams, Meeman 901 Channel.** You will be added to the Meeman 901 Teams channel during onboarding, and will be expected to contribute/respond to relevant channels and upload content/hours here. If it's not in Teams or another agency specified platform, it doesn't exist to the rest of the agency and therefore can't be counted.
 - **Sprout Social.** A social media scheduling platform. As required, you will be added to the appropriate client social media calendars on [Sprout Social](#).

Time expectations

Meeman 901 Strategies operates as a full-service strategic communication agency. 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, 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. As a remote team member, you will need to work approx. 10 – 11 hours each week on agency-related work.

Importance of staying caught up on hours. An issue sometimes seen in Meeman 901 Strategies 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 your need for additional work. The standard hours count per week is provided to help you understand how much work you must complete in the long run. Thus, if you fall behind one week, you should make up extra hours in the next week – these issues will build over time. If you don't reach between 135 and 150 hours, you will not pass the practicum and will not receive a passing grade for the course.

Although working remotely in a hybrid-style agency can be challenging, it is doable and the reality of our industry today. Strong communication skills are going to be paramount for your success - being online is not a reason to avoid team communication or responsiveness. Teams meetings with the faculty advisor and/or firm director can be a helpful tool for success, and can be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time.

Hours can acquired in the following ways:

- **Client work** (Content days, client events, editing, writing, design, research, plan development, scheduling, revisions, etc.)
- **Agency work** (Team meetings and communication, agency meetings, peer reviews, review of agency materials within reason, blog posts, agency team training and development, advanced branding work/social content, assisting other teams with work, etc.)
- **Approved professional development**

Professional expectations

Throughout the semester, you are expected to professionally represent the University of Memphis, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, and Meeman 901 Strategies. As your agency advisor, I do not take this lightly. While I look forward to this being an enjoyable experience for us all, I also have high standards that I am unwilling and unable to compromise

on. It's my mission for us to have a good time in Meeman 901 Strategies - opportunity for new professional connections and networking, additions to your professional portfolio, unique experiences, hands-on-learning and ability to get insider industry knowledge will exist within this practicum. You will be treated like professionals and trusted to manage your time, workload and clients. However, if at any point you are not upholding your end of the bargain, you are at risk of being "fired" from the agency and failing this course. Warnings will be distributed via your University email. Details on this process can be found in your agency handbook.

In addition to the faculty advisor, you will report to an agency firm director. This firm director is to be treated with respect at all times and considered to be an overall team-lead for the agency. Directions, corrections and critiques from the firm director should be taken seriously and handled within a timely manner. The firm director will handle the day-to-day management of the agency and should be kept in the loop regarding all client concerns and agency business. Additionally, you should keep a respectful working relationship with all team members. Disrespect, negativity and/or failure to be a productive/helpful/supportive team member will not be tolerated.

Check GroupMe regularly. Keep current with the latest developments and trends in the industry. Read industry blogs. Read local and national news sources to keep up with current events.

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.

Repeated issues with quality of work, not meeting deadlines, lack of communication or poor professional behavior can result in a deduction of hours or being dropped from a team within the agency. Similarly, exceptional performance, consistent publish-ready work without revision and stellar client reviews can result in an hour/time bonus.

Meeman 901 students have through Dec. 10 to complete any client work and submit scheduled items for approval, as well as complete the final practicum report.

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.

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 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 actively participating and engaging in all facets of the agency. Responding to GroupMe and Teams conversations in a timely manner is going to be pertinent for the participation of online team members. Allowing a week to pass without communication to your team/firm director could result in a formal warning for the course.

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) professionalism, completion of 150 hours, course and client deliverables (blogs, certifications, social media content), teamwork, and quality of work (error-free, on time).

Contacting me

The best way to contact me is via our university email (tckerman@memphis.edu), however if you have a time-sensitive question during normal working hours (M-F, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.) you are welcome to text me (731-225-7656). If texting, please always identify yourself and the client you are asking about if applicable. I will respond to emails within 48 hours, with the exception being weekends and University acknowledged breaks/holidays.

I'm happy to help with both practicum topics as well as other questions you may have pertaining to our field - please don't hesitate to reach out. If you have a problem, do not let it snowball - please contact me as soon as possible.

For questions about deliverable edits and/or team specific meetings, please first contact the firm director.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Professional Values and Competencies in JRS 4940

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, both in a global context and in the United States
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

How professional values and competencies will be met

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

- Examine the environment in which they work and the role they play in helping to achieve success.
- Convert classroom experiences and skills to the workplace to better understand real-world applications.
- Identify personal strengths and limitations and how those relate to their professional trajectories.
- Articulate the macro and micro factors that shape the success or failure of an organization—economy, politics and community—and the impact that they can make on these factors.

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

- Report on the internship experience by detailing completed tasks, the general workplace environment and their overall takeaways.
- Develop a broader portfolio of work appropriate to their field: a broadcast tape; news clips; ad copy or designs; and public relations writing, layout, or other appropriate work that is approved by the supervisor.
- Manage at least 150+ hours worked in the practicum position.

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Become aware of the environment in which they work and the role they play in helping to achieve success.

Understanding

- Understand their own strengths and limitations.
- Understand the position of their practicum in the broader media landscape.

Application

- Receive evaluation from supervisor.
- Develop a portfolio of work from the practicum.
- Produce final report detailing practicum experience.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSJ 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or SquareSpace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, 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
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

Electronic devices

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

AI/Chat GPT

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You 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. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and 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, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws 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 and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). 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.

Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; 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 seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. 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.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

AP Style and grammar

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

Disability and accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Diversity and inclusivity

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

Weather policy

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather.

Student support

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for

assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.