

Western University
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
Master of Media in Journalism and Communication

MJCOM 9604—Corporate Communications

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Master of Media in Journalism and Communication program.

Instructor: Erin Isings

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Office Hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays, 12-1 p.m.

Meetings: Wednesdays 9-11:50

Classroom: FNB 4110

Excellent writing is a fundamental skill for communications practitioners. This course will focus on critical analysis of many different types of professional communications from the perspective of for-profit and non-profit communications. Written assignments will build on MJCOM 9102's lessons on audience, framing, persuasive writing, key messaging and introduce elements of visual design. Using both case studies and examples from a wide range of real-world sources, students will practice and refine their thinking and writing skills across multiple corporate communications scenarios.

Course Goals/Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will:

- Demonstrate a strong understanding of nuances in professional writing as they relate to articulation
- Understand standard format and design as communication tools in written documents;
- Distinguish the audience and purpose for multiple business communication tools, such as reports, instructions, memos, letters; students will practice components of these through assignments.
- Demonstrate the importance of best practices in visual design as a component of corporate communications
- Have practiced as a recursive process the following roles: individual writing, collaborative writing and editing
- Understand the ethics involved in communicating information on behalf of a corporation
- Perform within professional expectations in relation to deadlines, accuracy and stakeholder relations at all stages of the writing process.

Course Communications

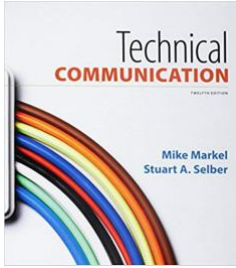
OWL will be our primary tool for communication. Please check the announcements regularly as well as your UWO email. Additional readings, class preparations, changes to classes and information on assignments will be posted on the site.

If you have a question regarding an assignment, a reading or homework, please post it to the discussion board on OWL. This will allow your classmates to benefit from your questions. If you need to email me directly about an individual issue, allow a 24-hour turnaround for a response—and longer over the weekend. Remember to use your UWO email account and please put MJCOM 9604 in the subject line.

Course Texts

Required

CP Caps and Spelling
 CP Stylebook
 Readings will be posted to OWL weekly.



Markel, M., & Selber, S.A. (2018).
 Technical Communication. 12th ed.
 Boston, MA: Bedford Books (on
 reserve in the FIMS Graduate
 Library)

- A Canadian dictionary—the Oxford English Dictionary is preferred
 - A comprehensive grammar book
- You can also access these publications online.

As future communicators, you should also

- Read newspapers daily—electronically and/or hard copy
- Listen to and/or view broadcast news, internet news, and other sources, i.e. become a news consumer

Tentative Course Schedule

Note that we will have software sessions that students must attend. Dates and times will be announced in class and on OWL.

Date	Readings and Activities
Week One Jan. 10	Welcome to MMJC 9604—Course overview
Week Two Jan. 17	Writing Professional Profiles
Week Three Jan. 24	Ethics in Corporate Communications
Week Four Jan. 31	Profile assignment due—15% Writing promotional materials
Week Five Feb. 7	Writing for Media Relations Writing Instructions, Descriptions and Definitions
Week Six Feb. 14	Media Relations Assignment due on Tuesday, Feb. 13 —15 % In-class exercise
Week Seven Feb. 21	2023 Reading Week
Week Eight Feb. 28	Procedure Assignment due—20 % Corporate Communications

Week Nine March 6	Visual Design
Week 10 March 13	Specialized Writing SEO Blog Assignment due—20%
Week 11 March 20	MMJC Production Days (Hold this week for Production Days activities)
Week 12 March 27	Visual Design Assignment due in class Peer Editing (in class)
Week 13 April 3	Visual Design Assignment due to Erin—20 %
Week 14 April 10	Visual Design Showcase & Sharing

Assessment

Your final grade will be determined using the following:

<u>Deliverable</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Professional profile	Jan. 31	15%
Media Relations Assignment	Feb. 13	15%
Procedure Assignment	Feb. 28	20%
SEO Blog Assignment	March 13	20%
Visual Design Project	March 27	20%
Professionalism	Ongoing	10%

The above due dates are subject to change as the course progresses. Changes will be announced in class and on OWL. A full assignment sheet and rubric will be posted for the first five deliverables.

Professionalism

Attendance and meaningful participation are mandatory requirements of 9604's professionalism component. Being present, punctual and prepared are the bare minimum.

The basics of what you are supposed to do include:

- provide constructive feedback on your peers' writing; the goal is to help others to improve the quality of their work
- accept constructive feedback on your own writing and implement edits as appropriate
- complete readings and come prepared to discuss
- make thoughtful in-class contributions
- display a respectful and professional attitude toward others
- show initiative and a positive attitude on projects
- find solutions, not problems
- be constructive, honest, accountable and behave ethically
- represent the MMJC program and Western University in a professional manner in all interactions with the community.

I expect that you'll show initiative above and beyond the basics to earn professionalism marks. For example, you could volunteer to help during in-class exercises. You could also post

professional writing examples that have a particular noteworthy quality that you feel would be useful to your peers. There are many ways to earn professionalism marks; please contact me if you require further info.

Please be aware that I do consult with our technical team when calculating professionalism grades. Refer to the MMJC program policy on attendance:

http://intranet.fims.uwo.ca/graduate/academic_programs/mmjc/attendance_requirements.html

The MMJC program rules are very clear about not missing class to complete work for other classes. If you are unable to attend class, refer to the notes below on accommodations. It is the full responsibility of a student who has missed a class to catch up on the work missed and to complete assignments generated during class time. It is recommended that students look out for one another (take notes, etc.) to share with the absent student.

A further note on attendance: Students who miss classes and/or fail to participate/appear will be penalized through a reduction of grades. Use of electronic devices for non-class purposes may result in a missed class penalty. If you are unable to attend class, please e-mail prior to class.

I retain copyright to all MJC0M 9604 course content uploaded and broadcasted through OWL and Zoom. I retain all copyright to my lectures and course materials. I do not authorize you to upload any course content to note-sharing websites such as OneClass, CourseHero, Studydrive or share my course content in any other way.

Remote learning sessions for this course may be recorded—advance notice will be given. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals under special circumstances. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings.

Assignments

All assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise stated on the assignment sheet. Late assignments will be penalized with a five per cent deduction per 24 hours late; deduction time starts at the beginning of class. No late assignments will be accepted after graded assignments have been returned. Please keep a copy of your assignment until you receive the original back.

When submitting work through OWL or to a directory folder, it is the student's responsibility to verify that the submission has been uploaded. All students are expected to practice appropriate time-management strategies; requests to extend an assignment's deadline will not be granted.

Notes on Releasing Student Work Online

Students are not permitted to release course work to a community partner or to the public domain (internet) until they have faculty approval. This means that you must wait until I have vetted and approved your project before you can upload it online or share it via your networks. You are not permitted to post any of our in-class scenarios (mock exercises) online. Your first priority in this course is to fulfill the requirements of each assignment; once this is done then you may consider the requests of your community partners.

Disclosure

In the event that our class work allows us to partner with organizations or groups outside of our classroom, students are expected to initiate this professional relationship for MJCOM 9604 purposes. As a matter of ethics, any existing relationship —whether personal or professional— must be disclosed to me before the assignment begins. Students require approval before pursuing any assignment where there is an existing relationship.

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. Plagiarism is a major academic (and journalistic) offence. See further notes below.

Erin's note on academic offenses:

It's expected that all submitted work will be original work by each student, and all submitted work must be original work created specifically for MJCOM 9604. Students may not repurpose content from other coursework or past courses/internships/employment to use in MJCOM 9604. Students are expected to recognize the limitations of wikipedia and other sources. Please see me if you have any questions.

Students are reminded that plagiarism —using another's work, ideas, or words without giving credit—is a serious scholastic offence. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence to create content that is submitted as one's own. Students who use AI-content generators (such as ChatGPT) to complete assignments without attribution or permission from the instructor are committing a scholastic offence.

Remember, images are subject to copyright. Images must be documented carefully and reproduced only under certain conditions. There are also certain assignments in my course where collaboration is not permitted. This means that students are not permitted to discuss the assignment with one another.

If you are ever in doubt or have any questions, please talk to me before assignment submission.

Notes from the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Information and Media Studies**Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_gra_d.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently

submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Related Policies and Notes

For the Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs, and a downloadable SMC see:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Students seeking academic accommodation on illness grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth more than 30% of their final grade, must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor, or department.

The student must contact the instructor as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements for course elements worth 30% or less.