

JOUR 515

# Mass Communications Capstone

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Office Hours: TBD and by appointment.

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SJMC 225

Tuesday and Thursday, 1:15–2:40pm

## Course Bulletin Description

“Development of Mass Communications ePortfolio showcasing and reflecting on coursework and experiential learning, with a focus on leadership, as preparation for matriculation in higher education or careers in mass media.”

## Course Description

A portfolio should demonstrate the range and reliability of your talents. A capstone portfolio also should compile and reflect upon a selection of your past work and experiences, articulate it with contemporary issues and controversies (for this semester, the role of leadership across different mass communication contexts) in your chosen field. Then, be equipped to relay this to different audiences and constituencies. Given all of this, I regard JOUR 515 as a skills-based course. Though it may look like you have much writing to do, it's all short. Think of your work in this class as “elevator work.” If you find yourself sharing an elevator ride with someone you want to impress, what do you say (or do) in such a limited period? Likewise, your work for this course features “elevator writing” that should be concise, adaptable, efficient, nimble, and always professional.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Identify future directions, professionally and academically, guided by reflection about within-the-classroom and beyond-the-classroom experiences and course readings.
- Analyze and contextualize how diversity, equity, and inclusion dynamics impact different mass communication contexts using appropriate concepts/theories/frameworks.
- Apply an understanding of leadership in mass communications by addressing problems that incorporate learning from previous experiences and course readings.
- Assemble, present, and showcase how previous experiences have contributed to personal growth, learning, leadership, and professional development.

## Required Materials

### *Textbooks and readings*

Omilion-Hodges, L. M., & Ptacek, J. K. (2021). *Leader-member exchange and organizational communication: Facilitating a healthy work environment*. Palgrave MacMillan. ISBN: 2730- 5333.

- Available as a free e-book at University Libraries: <https://bit.ly/34ueB1G>

All other readings will be posted to Blackboard in advance of the class session for which they are due.

## Technology requirements

Links to articles, assignments, quizzes, and rubrics are located on Blackboard. To participate in learning activities and complete assignments, you will need:

- Access to a working computer that has a current operating system with updates installed, plus speakers or headphones to hear lecture presentations
- Reliable Internet access and a UofSC email account
- A current Internet browser that is compatible with Blackboard (Google Chrome is the recommended browser for Blackboard)
- Microsoft Word as your word processing program
- Reliable data storage for your work, such as a USB drive or Office365 OneDrive cloud storage

If your computer does not have Microsoft Word, Office 365 ProPlus package is available to you free of charge and allows you to install Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote, Publisher, and Access on up to 5 PCs or Macs and Office apps on other mobile devices including tablets. Office 365 also includes unlimited cloud storage on OneDrive. To download Office 365 ProPlus, log into your student (University) email through a web browser, choose Settings (top right corner), and select software. If you have further questions or need help with the software, please contact the Service Desk

([https://www.sc.edu/about/offices\\_and\\_divisions/university\\_technology\\_services/support/servicedesk.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/university_technology_services/support/servicedesk.php)).

## Minimal technical skills needed

Minimal technical skills are needed in this course. Most course work will be completed and submitted in Blackboard. Therefore, you must have consistent and reliable access to a computer and the Internet. The minimal technical skills you need to have include the ability to:

- Organize and save electronic files
- Use UofSC email and attached files
- Check email and Blackboard daily
- Download and upload documents
- Locate information with a browser
- Use Blackboard.

## Evaluation

This class will use the standard USC grading scheme:

<b>A</b>	90-100%	<b>B+</b>	85-89.99%	<b>B</b>	80-84.99%
<b>C+</b>	75-79.99%	<b>C</b>	70-74.99%	<b>D+</b>	65-69.99%
<b>D</b>	60-64.99%	<b>F</b>	0-59.99%		

## Assignments

This class enrolls both undergraduate and graduate students, who will have slightly different grading criteria.

For undergraduates, the final grade in the class will tentatively consist of the following:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>% Total</b>
Reading Responses x8	15%
Career Presentation	15%
Leadership Interview	15%
Insights Essays x3	30%
ePortfolio	15%
In-class Activities	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Reading Responses

Each chapter of our textbook ends with a 'mini case study' and three reading response questions. You must answer all three questions and provide a thoughtful response— where you are welcome to draw from existing academic literature and your own organizational experiences (meaning you can write in the first person). Your response to all three questions should be about half of a single-spaced page using typical fonts (e.g., Times New Roman, Calibri, Tahoma, Arial). You will be graded on content, not length. All reading responses are due just before class begins on the assigned due date listed on the course schedule. Please upload your responses as a .doc, .docx or .pdf file.

### Career Presentation

The purpose of this assignment is to explore the current state of an industry or a career that interests you. You will give a 4-to-6-minute presentation about a career you are interested in and its prospects in the job market. You will identify the pros and cons of that specific career field from your perspective. Your presentation must include the following: A question-and-answer session, where you field audience members' questions about your topic, and a multimedia component, used to support and supplement your presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi). These presentations will be scattered throughout the semester and you will have the opportunity to sign up for a date and topic of your choosing.

### Leadership Interview

The purpose of this assignment is to examine how people think about and apply communication concepts to their organizations. You will conduct an interview with someone in a leadership role in an organization to determine what communication challenges their company is facing. Ideally, this leader and their organization are within an industry you would like to work in (specifically, a company you would like to work for, or somewhere you currently work). You will submit this assignment in a multi-media/creative format — you may not submit only a transcribed/recorded interview. Instead, you may write it up in the style of an article for a general audience, edit it into a podcast, create a video essay, condense into a proposed social media campaign, etc.

## Insights Essays

JOUR 515's capstone ePortfolio is modeled after UofSC's Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD) requirements. Although we are not following the GLD's ePortfolio requirement exactly, you will write three essays that can be placed on your ePortfolio website. You will submit drafts of each before they are placed online. A key insight indicates a change in your professional or personal perspectives and practices. Each essay should be 600-800 words (about three double-spaced pages) and uploaded on Blackboard in .doc or .docx format to allow for tracked changes.

The three essays can be summarized as follows:

1. **Within-classroom Connections:** Elaborate how a within-classroom learning experience has led to a key insight. You should include an artifact that reflects connections from your classroom learning.
2. **Beyond-the-classroom Connections:** Elaborate how a beyond-the-classroom learning experience has led to a key insight. You should include an artifact that reflects connections from your learning outside of the classroom.
3. **About Me:** Although we write it last, this shorter essay is typically used as the introductory page of the ePortfolio. You will include information like where you are from, where you were educated and in what subject(s), what your near and long-term plans are, and some associated "artifacts." These can include a portrait of you, a resume, work samples, etc.

## Final ePortfolio

Your ePortfolio serves as a culmination of your college experience (so far) by highlighting your goals/interests and the skills/knowledge you have developed. Your final, complete ePortfolio should be both professional and unique and must include a minimum of the two key insights essays plus the About Me essay. This will be displayed on a website you create.

Some example ePortfolios by past students include:

- <https://camdynbruce11.wixsite.com/my-site-1> (Camdyn Bruce)
- <https://sarahgw2.wixsite.com/my-site> (Sarah Grace Williamson)
- <https://harrisonstrong1998.wixsite.com/website> (Harrison Strong)

## Grade Disputes

Any dispute about a grade must be done within one week of the grade posting. You should compose an email, making clear that you are challenging the grade, with information about the assignment and details (using the rubric and/or guidelines) of why you feel you should receive a different score. I may request that we meet to discuss it further. There is no guarantee of a grade change in response to such a challenge, but you can rest assured that you will not be penalized even if additional errors are discovered.

## Course Policies

### *Reasonable Accommodation Policy*

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Student Disability Resource Center: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email [sasds@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sasds@mailbox.sc.edu), or stop by LeConte College Room 112A. All accommodations must be approved through the Student Disability Resource Center.

### *Late policy*

Late work may be accepted with full credit under most circumstances *with the important exceptions of quizzes and discussion questions*. Communication with the instructor is essential for receiving credit on late work. The goal is

to be flexible, but not fall behind in the course. This policy may be changed at short notice if students are struggling to keep up without the motivation of late penalties.

### *Faculty feedback and response time*

Allow 10-14 days for grades on major assignments, although sometimes you will receive feedback sooner. In general, expect a response to emails within 24 hours on business days. If you haven't gotten a response after a couple of days, feel free to reach out again.

### *Written assignments*

All written work must be typed and should conform to APA formatting, citing, and referencing guidelines (see <http://www.apastyle.org/> and <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). Title pages and abstracts are never required, however. You will not be graded for adhering to all the details of APA formatting, but you must communicate clearly so as to avoid plagiarism and confusion.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. on the assigned due date.

### *Academic misconduct*

#### **Honor Code**

Every student has a role in maintaining the academic reputation of the university. It is imperative that you refrain from engaging in plagiarism, cheating, falsifying your work and/or assisting other students in violating the Honor Code. Two important components of the Honor Code:

- Faculty members are required to report potential violations of the Honor Code to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.
- When a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate the Honor Code, it is their responsibility to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member.

Your enrollment in this class signifies your willingness to accept these responsibilities and uphold the Honor Code of the University of South Carolina. Please review the Honor Code Policies. Any deviation from this expectation can result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.

#### **Copyright**

Lectures and course materials (which is inclusive of my presentations, tests, exams, outlines, and lecture notes) may be protected by copyright. You are encouraged to take notes and utilize course materials for your own educational purpose. However, you are not to reproduce or distribute this content without my expressed written permission. This includes sharing course materials to online social study sites like Course Hero and other services.

Students who publicly reproduce, distribute or modify course content maybe in violation of the university's Honor Code's Complicity policy, which states: sharing academic work with another student (either in person or electronically) without the permission of the instructor. To best understand the parameters around copyright and intellectual property review <http://www.sc.edu/policies/acad133.pdf>.

#### **Collaboration**

A student's grades are to represent to what extent that individual student has mastered the course content. You should assume that you are to complete course work individually (without the use of another person or un-cited outside source) unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. It is your responsibility to seek clarification if you are unclear about what constitutes proper or improper collaboration. For skills assignments, you will be given a

more specific definition of what constitutes collaboration because seeking outside help is one of the skills you should develop.

### **Reusing course materials**

The use of previous semester course materials is not allowed in this course. This applies to homework, projects, and quizzes. Because these aids are not available to all students within the course, their use by any individual student undermines the fundamental principles of fairness and disrupts your professor's ability to accurately evaluate your work. Any potential violations will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity for review.

### *Diversity and inclusion*

The university is committed to a campus environment that is inclusive, safe, and respectful for all persons, and one that fully embraces the Carolinian Creed. To that end, all course activities will be conducted in an atmosphere of friendly participation and interaction among colleagues, recognizing and appreciating the unique experiences, background, and point of view each student brings. You are expected at all times to apply the highest academic standards to this course and to treat others with dignity and respect.

## **Changing nature of this syllabus**

The assignments, policies, and readings in this syllabus are subject to change at any time. If this occurs, the changes will be announced and an updated version of the syllabus will be posted to Blackboard.

Unless otherwise specified, quizzes, discussion posts, and other assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the date they are due.

**If the information on Blackboard contradicts this syllabus, assume the information on Blackboard is correct.**