**CJ 105 – COMMUNICATION IN THE INFORMATION AGE**

**COURSE SYLLABUS – FALL 2012**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Anthony Letourneau** is our **Blugold Writing Fellow** (BWF). What is a BWF (and why do we have one)? BWFs are paired with some UWEC courses where students are expected to do writing assignments. BWFs assist you in strengthening your writing (when/if you need this assistance). How can Anthony help you? 1) He will talk with you about how clearly you are expressing written ideas in your assignments. What may seem clear to you, because you’re mentally filling in elements missing in the final project so that it makes sense in your brain, may not be clear to the people (like your professor) who are reading only what is in print in your assignment. 2) He can help you brainstorm new ideas for or identify underdeveloped ideas already in your assignment. In other words, he will tell you, “Write more about this really cool stuff in this paragraph here and maybe a little less about this other stuff in this other paragraph.” 3) He can look at technical issues and assist you in learning how to correct mistakes you are making so that you do not continue to make them in the future. *Ultimately, you do not have to think of yourself as a “bad” technical writer (or a person earning a low grade on an assignment because of technical mistakes) to seek his advice. His goals, and those of the Writing Center, are NOT limited to helping students struggling with technical skills, but with every aspect of the writing process. While you are here at UWEC discovering your greatness, take advantage of this resource meant to enhance that greatness.*

By the way, as a researcher I share my writing with my colleagues (and they with me) to get feedback before I send a paper to a journal or conference. I expect my colleagues to be honest with me about any weaknesses in my writing, suggesting places of improvement (such as an interesting idea that I have yet to develop fully). As students, you often do not have peers who can/will do that for you…until now. Take advantage of Anthony’s help. He comes highly recommended by the Writing Center and has been trained in ways to assist you in your development as a writer.

**TEXT & MATERIALS**

**Required textbook:** *Critical Thinking in Communication.* McGraw-Hill (2011). This is a “Create” textbook, meaning the CJ faculty selected the chapters in our book from multiple other textbooks to create a “sampling” of the wide range of content important to communication and journalism professionals. Because this is a collection, you will encounter style differences between the chapters and references within one chapter to materials in another chapter of the original textbook that are not appearing in our collection of chapters. This approach to building our textbook was more effective for this course than requiring you to buy two textbooks that we would not fully use. It is my hope that the style differences/reference problems are not too distracting or disappointing.

**Course Management: Desire2Learn (D2L) -** We will be using D2L for its content, quizzing, grade book, and attendance functions.

**COURSE INFORMATION**   
**Course Description:** This course provides you with an introduction to communication in its multiple forms, from interpersonal to mass media. We will examine the extensive influence these forms of communication have on us as individuals and on our communities locally, nationally, and globally. We will apply critical analysis to sources, their messages, and the recipients’ interpretations and interactions to understand the power in relationships and the effects of communication on political, economic, and social processes.

**Course Objectives:** Communication abilities are listed as the top skills sought by employers in most fields. Even though we all communicate in multiple ways on a daily basis, using these abilities well does not come naturally (we are not good at it just because we do it regularly). Success, in part, requires understanding the many different forms our communicated messages take and the contexts these forms are exhibited. By increasing your communication knowledge, you equip yourself with an essential tool needed to achieve personal and professional goals and to participate in our democracy. Specifically, in this course students should A) develop an appreciation and understanding that the quality of our world depends upon the quality of our communication messages; B) enhance your ability to actively participate in a democratic and global society as ethical producers and critical consumers of messages in interpersonal, group, organizational, public, and mass media contexts; C) enhance your understanding of the fundamental social and economic implications of the Internet convergence of mass media, interpersonal, public, and organizational communication; and D) enhance your understanding of the multi-faceted disciplines of the Department of Communication and Journalism.

**Course Content/Format:** To fulfill the course description/objectives, your in-class experience will consist of A) lectures and presentations designed to supplement readings; B) discussions designed to allow you an opportunity to express your understanding of course content; and C) short think pieces/responses to readings or other activities and quizzes and exams designed for me to assess your understanding of course content.

**Course meets UWEC baccalaureate goals:** This course meets the UWEC Liberal Education Learning Goals and Outcomes: A) Knowledge of human culture and the natural world – you will learn about the role of varying communication contexts (i.e. culture) in shaping human communities; B) Creative and critical thinking – accomplished through your analysis of communicated messages, environments, and practices; C) Effective communication – you will learn about communication from sender, message, context, medium, and receiver applications and perspectives and will express your understanding of these applications and perspectives; D) Individual and social responsibility – communication is an essential part of community involvement that you will explore through the context of this course; E) Respect for diversity among people – because the right to free speech (i.e. communication) also comes with the obligation of responsible communication, in this course you will learn about the ethic of responsible communication.

**Course meets CJ department goals:** To prepare students for their role as communicators in a democratic society, the department as established the following goal areas: A) oral, written, and visual communication skills; B) research and information-gathering skills; C) critical and analytical thinking; and D) awareness and knowledge of communication processes in diverse cultural, social, legal, and aesthetic contexts. These goal areas will be addressed through class readings, lectures, and discussions as well as assignments including quizzes over course materials and currents events and short writing assignments.

**Accommodation Policy:** UWEC is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for all students. Students with disabilities are offered a variety of services and accommodations to insure that both facilities and programs are accessible. If you believe a disability of any sort is affecting your ability to complete this course, you should talk to me or contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

1. **Grading philosophy:** Please look to each assignment for the grading rubric/expectations specific to that assignment. In general, an “A” is earned by exceeding the minimum assignment requirements (e.g. more challenging writing, attention to detail, original thought). A “B” has some attention to these same concerns. A “C” is average. Little is original/unique and the product indicates that the student gave the minimum thought/work that was asked for and nothing more. Since it is similar to the majority of others in its achievement, it is average. A “D” exhibits less than expected amounts of work, attention to detail, ability to follow directions, and/or original ideas. An “F” failed to meet the assignment expectations that should be possible of a college student and/or is filled with technical mistakes and content problems. As you contemplate your potential to earn a grade, analyze your ungraded work and identify what is above average in it (if you expect an “A” or “B” grade). If you feel you got a lower grade than you expected on an assignment, and you want to talk to me about that grade, be prepared to justify why your work is deserving of a higher grade based on the grading philosophy noted above and the rubric noted in the assignment.
2. **If you will be gone for a planned absence** (e.g. university-sponsored activity or a funeral)**,** complete assignments due while you would be gone before you take your absence. Failure to do so may result in a “0” for that assignment. Official documentation must be provided.
3. **If you will be gone for a documentable emergency** (e.g. an illness with a doctor’s note), provide official documentation that indicates the reason for your absence and inability to complete your assignment on time. I will then determine a new due date.
4. **If you are gone for an undocumented absence** (illness without a doctor’s note), email (see #5) me a copy of any assigned materials by the time it is due. Failure to indicate that an assignment is completed by its due date and time could result in a “0” for that assignment.
5. **If you e-mail me an assignment** (see #4), the e-mail only confirms that the assignment was ready by the due date/time. I may not grade the assignment until I get the paper copy. I may subtract points from the value of this assignment the longer it takes you to deliver this copy.
6. **Do not e-mail me assignments assuming that I will print them off for you.**
7. **Permission to make up a late assignment** may mean that you are expected to do an alternative assignment.
8. **Late assignments** may lose up to 25% of their value for every 24-hour period that they are late starting with the first point deduction immediately after I collect the assignment.
9. **Attendance** will be taken during most class periods starting the second week of class. I do not give/subtract points for attendance. I do report attendance issues to the appropriate university officials if they ask (which is often done for the purposes of financial aid).
10. **If you are absent/late to class for any reason**, you are responsible for material covered and announcements made during your absence. If we are working on an in-class assignment, you will not get extra time to complete it because you came to class late or left early.
11. **In this class, I demand respect for all people** regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, abilities, disabilities, veteran’s status, etc. Class discussions and assignments should reflect that respect. This class is not the place for name-calling, abusive language, or statements that that threaten, diminish, or insult others and their path in this life (whether or not these people are in this class). If you cannot abide by this expectation, I would suggest you find another course.
12. **In this class, I demand respect for the classroom environment.** Be aware that inappropriate behavior that disrupts or disrespects your peers or me will result in a loss of points. This includes cell phone/mobile device use (texting during class, answering calls in class), lap top/electronic notebook use (surfing the internet, working on projects for other classes), music listening device use, and conversations (on-going whispering) with peers. If you must have access to your phone because of a personal emergency, please sit at the end of a row near an exit and leave the room when you must call or text. In emergencies such as these, it is advisable and polite for you take your personal items with you and leave that day’s class permanently so as not to disrespect others. I do allow the use of laptops/electronic notebooks for note taking purposes. HOWEVER, because these devices can be distracting to other students, there may be times during a class meeting where they cannot be used and/or designated places in our classroom for users to sit (please ask about such places).
13. **Plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will instantly result in a “0” for the assignment (no exceptions).** These students may also be dismissed from the course with a failing grade. If questions about grades cannot be resolved between the two of us, the university’s grade appeals policy will be followed.
14. **Activities done in class for participation points are usually not returned with a grade.**
15. **When emailing me regarding class business**, 1) they include information in the subject line to explain the nature of your message; 2) identify yourself fully in the message (including full name and course); 3) use appropriate writing techniques in your message (spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting of paragraphs, etc.); 4) questions that could be answered by you reading the syllabus or assignment handouts will not be answered through an email.
16. **Do not have your parents/guardians/representatives contact me on your behalf about your performance/grade in this class (with exception of significant medical concerns).**  Your performance/grade should be addressed between you and me, even if your parents are paying for your education. It is highly unlikely that I will discuss your performance/grade with them. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law protecting your privacy and I follow it closely by avoiding conversations about your performance with anyone other than you or university officials. Find information at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Chapter quizzes:** There will be an open-book/open-note D2L chapter quiz over each chapter. These quizzes may include material presented in earlier classes that may not have been addressed in the textbook. You will need to complete the quizzes before we discuss the respective chapters in class.

**Current event quizzes:** Nearly every week there will be a short D2L current event quiz. A significant portion of this course is about communication messages shared with us via the mass media, rhetoric/public communication, and organizational communication. It is important to understand not only these contexts for communication, but also the issues (world, national, local) that are communicated via these contexts. My objective with these quizzes is not to stump you with difficult or obscure questions, but to ask you questions that you should be able to answer if you consume a reasonable amount of news in a week (and you will have to be a consumer of the news this semester). For these quizzes, you will receive random questions selected from the bank of questions I write for each quiz.

**Exams:** The textbook is broken into four content areas. There will be an exam for content area one, content area two, and content areas three & four together. The final exam of the three is NOT comprehensive. The exams will be multiple choice with questions drawn from the chapter quizzes.

**Writing activities:** There will be six 2-page out-of-class writing activities this semester. See the content section of D2L for these assignments.

**Participation:** There will be many in-class writing activities this semester. Most will be done individually, but some may be with a partner or as a small group.

**Instructor Points Possible Points**

Chapter quizzes 14 quizzes x 10 points/quiz 140 points\*

Current event quizzes 13 quizzes x 5 points/quiz 65 points\*

Exams 3 exams x 50 points/exam 150 points

Writing activities 6 papers x 30 points/paper 180 points

Participation varying point values 90 points

**Total 625 points**

\* You will NOT be able to view correct answers to quiz questions until after all students have completed the quiz. **ALL QUIZZES ARE DUE AT 2:00 PM ON THEIR DUE DATE!** If you do not take a quiz, you will be unable to see the answers to that quiz when they are posted (which may affect your ability to study for the three exams). Please ask a friend to share the correct answers to the missed quiz with you.

**Extra Credit Opportunities:** A)The “bonus” quiz over the syllabus is worth 15 points of extra credit. B) If you meet with Anthony to work on a paper, you will get 3 points of extra credit added to that paper (3 points/paper x six papers = 18 points possible). Anthony will post times he is available to meet with students (which, because of the size of our class, may be done as group (instead of individual) meetings). C) There MAY be additional extra credit opportunities that arise. Any additional opportunities I offer, if they arise, will likely require you to attend an event on campus that I tell you about and to write about that event in the context of our course. For now, take advantage of the 33 points of extra credit I am already offering you.

**Grading**

625-582 = A 581-563 = A- 562-544 = B+ 543-519 = B 518-500 = B-

499-481 = C+ 480-457 = C 456-438 = C- 437-419 = D+ 418-394 = C

393-375 = D- Below 375 = F