STUDENT WARNING: This course syllabus is from a previous semester archive and serves only as a preparatory reference. Please use this syllabus as a reference only until the professor opens the classroom and you have access to the updated course syllabus. Please do NOT purchase any books or start any work based on this syllabus; this syllabus may NOT be the one that your individual instructor uses for a course that has not yet started. If you need to verify course textbooks, please refer to the online course description through your student portal. This syllabus is proprietary material of APUS.

Course Summary

Course: MAPP502  Title: Public Writing  
Length of Course: 8  
Prerequisites: N/A  
Credit Hours: 3

Description

Course Description: The art of good public writing involves many stages: good memos and grant proposals do not just "happen" overnight. And competent reports or engaging press releases do not constitute everything you know about their central subject. They are the product of much thought, research and frequently much revision. The good news is that, like any technique, it is one that can be learned through practice and useful feedback. MAPP 502 is designed to provide just this, with a special emphasis on developing self-evaluation techniques for you to draw from and use professionally long after you have completed your Master's degree.

Course Scope:

This course focuses on discussing, developing and practicing the techniques and understanding required to produce good public writing of different kinds. The skills learned will benefit students who intend to engage in all areas of the policy professions, public administration, policy advocacy/lobbying, think tank enterprises, the nonprofit sector, the political media, or work in governmental institutions. In fact, the skills you consolidate in this course will continue to pay dividends even if your chosen profession lies well outside these areas.

The course guides you through the process of writing several types of professional public communications including: memos, policy briefs, initial grant proposals, white papers and press releases. We will cover the criteria to look for and emulate in a good public document, learn how to assess the needs and interests of diverse audiences and how to present relevant information to them in the most effective way. The course also explores the impact of the law and electronic communications on public communications and the role that social media plays in the public writing of today and tomorrow. Students will be expected to distinguish good work from bad both in their own writing and in the published works used to construct them.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to meet the following learning objectives:

1. Develop your professional writing skills in the context of policy making/public administration and refine a variety of these skills through writing different types of policy papers.
2. Understand how to find and cite reliable sources in public communications and appreciate some of the
central laws on clear writing for policy and public service purposes.

3. Identify the key components in different types of public writing genres as well as isolate good and bad techniques in one’s own writing and that of others.

4. Write for different audiences on diverse policy situations, applying the appropriate style to effectively communicate policy recommendations.

5. Develop critical analytic skills further through wide reading, using different perspectives and effectively incorporating the work of others in your writing, including good citation practice.

6. Learn how to plan, research for, structure and write an incisive policy brief, a persuasive grant proposal, a detailed white paper, and an engaging press release.

Outline

Week 1: Introduction to Public Writing

Learning Outcomes

1.

Reading/Assignments

Read: Swain, Chapters 1-4. See Course Materials below for additional reading.

Forum 1.1 Welcome & Introduction

Forum 1.2 What is public writing and why do we study it?

Week 2: Planning Your Public Communications

Learning Outcomes

2, 3, 5, 6

Readings/Assignments

Read: Swain, Chapter 13 and Appendix A-B

The Plain Writing Act of 2010

Characteristics of good government writing

The Basics of APA Style – Tutorial

See Course Materials below for additional reading.

Forum 2 APUS Library Investigation

Week 3: Emails, Memos, Letters and Briefs

Learning Outcomes

1,2,3,4,5,6

Readings/Assignments

Read: Swain, Chapter 5. See Course Materials below for additional reading.
Watch: The art and craft of policy briefs

What makes a good policy brief?

Forum 3 Memos

Assignment: Draft a policy brief

Week 4: Proposals

Learning Outcomes
1, 3, 4, 5

Readings/Assignments
Read: Swain, Chapters 10-11. See Course Materials below for additional reading.

How to write a winning grant proposal

Forum 4 Proposals

Assignment: Write a grant proposal

Week 5: Report writing

Learning Outcomes
1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Readings/Assignments
Read: Swain, Chapter 9. See Course Materials below for additional reading.

White papers

Clusters and Economic Policy

Forum 5 Reports

Week 6: Justifications

Learning Outcomes
1, 3, 4, 5

Readings/Assignments
Read: Swain, Chapter 12. See Course Materials below for additional reading.

Writing a budget narrative

Watch: Biggest proposal budget bloopers

Forum 6 Budget justifications

Week 7: Press Releases, Newsletters
Learning Outcomes
1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Readings/Assignments

Read: Swain, Chapters 7-8. See Course Materials below for additional reading.

How to write a press release

How to write a government press release

Forum 7 Newsletter

Assignment: Draft a press release

Week 8: Social media

Learning Outcomes
1,2,4,5,6

Required Readings

Read: Social media’s ability to influence policymakers grows globally

Creating a social media report that matters

Mobile messaging and social media 2015

See Course Materials below for additional reading.

Forum 8 Social Media

Assignment: Produce a Twitter, Web or Wiki entry

Evaluation

Grading:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Grade %</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Brief</td>
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Materials

**Book Title:** Effective Writing in the Public Sector  
**Author:** Swain, J. and Swain, K.  
**Publication Info:** Routledge  
**ISBN:** 9780765641502

The required reading articles for each week can be found by searching the APUS library article database or online are listed below, followed by supplementary reading/viewing:

**Lesson Week One: Introduction to Public Writing**

**Required Reading:**


**Supplementary Reading:**


**Lesson Week Two: Guidelines, Sources and Planning Your Public Communications**

**Required Reading:**


**Supplementary Reading:**


**Lesson Week 3: Emails, Memos, Letters and Briefs**

**Required Reading/Viewing:**


**Supplementary Reading:**


**Lesson Week 4: Proposals**

**Required Reading:**


**Supplementary Reading/Viewing:**


Lesson Week 5: Reports

Required Reading:


The Writing Center at UNC. (2014) “Grant Proposals (or Give me the money!).” http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/grant-proposals-or-give-me-the-money/

Supplementary Reading/Viewing:


Lesson Week 6: Justifications

Required Reading:


Grant Central Station. (n.d.) “Writing a Budget Narrative.” http://grant-central-station.com/articles/33/


Supplementary Reading/Viewing:

Lesson Week 7: Press Releases and Newsletters

Required Reading:


Supplementary Reading/Viewing:


Lesson Week 8: Social Media

Required Reading:


Supplementary Reading/Viewing:


Marcum, Tanya, and Perry, Sandra. (2014) *When a Public Employer Doesn't Like What Its Employees*


Section 508 Law and Related Laws and Policies. (n.d.) http://www.section508.gov/content/learn/laws-and-policies


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**Course Guidelines**

**Citation and Reference Style**

- Attention Please: Students will follow the APA Format as the sole citation and reference style used in written work submitted as part of coursework to the University. Assignments completed in a narrative essay or composition format must follow the citation style cited in the APA Format.

**Tutoring**

- **Tutor.com** offers online homework help and learning resources by connecting students to certified tutors for one-on-one help. AMU and APU students are eligible for 10 free hours* of tutoring provided by APUS. Tutors are available 24/7 unless otherwise noted. Tutor.com also has a SkillCenter Resource Library offering educational resources, worksheets, videos, websites and career help. Accessing these resources does not count against tutoring hours and is also available 24/7. Please visit the APUS Library and search for 'Tutor' to create an account.

**Late Assignments**

- Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. The due date for each assignment is listed under each Assignment.
- Generally speaking, late work may result in a deduction up to 20% of the grade for each day late, not to exceed 5 days.
- As a working adult I know your time is limited and often out of your control. Faculty may be more flexible if they know ahead of time of any potential late assignments.
Turn It In

- Faculty may require assignments be submitted to Turnitin.com. Turnitin.com will analyze a paper and report instances of potential plagiarism for the student to edit before submitting it for a grade. In some cases professors may require students to use Turnitin.com. This is automatically processed through the Assignments area of the course.

Academic Dishonesty

- Academic Dishonesty incorporates more than plagiarism, which is using the work of others without citation. Academic dishonesty includes any use of content purchased or retrieved from web services such as CourseHero.com. Additionally, allowing your work to be placed on such web services is academic dishonesty, as it is enabling the dishonesty of others. The copy and pasting of content from any web page, without citation as a direct quote, is academic dishonesty. When in doubt, do not copy/paste, and always cite.

Submission Guidelines

- Some assignments may have very specific requirements for formatting (such as font, margins, etc) and submission file type (such as .docx, .pdf, etc) See the assignment instructions for details. In general, standard file types such as those associated with Microsoft Office are preferred, unless otherwise specified.

Disclaimer Statement

- Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

Communicating on the Forum

- Forums are the heart of the interaction in this course. The more engaged and lively the exchanges, the more interesting and fun the course will be. Only substantive comments will receive credit. Although there is a final posting time after which the instructor will grade comments, it is not sufficient to wait until the last day to contribute your comments/questions on the forum. The purpose of the forums is to actively participate in an on-going discussion about the assigned content.
- “Substantive” means comments that contribute something new and hopefully important to the discussion. Thus a message that simply says “I agree” is not substantive. A substantive comment contributes a new idea or perspective, a good follow-up question to a point made, offers a response to a question, provides an example or illustration of a key point, points out an inconsistency in an argument, etc.
- As a class, if we run into conflicting viewpoints, we must respect each individual's own opinion. Hateful and hurtful comments towards other individuals, students, groups, peoples, and/or societies will not be tolerated.

University Policies

Student Handbook

- Drop/Withdrawal policy
- Extension Requests
- Academic Probation
- Appeals
- Disability Accommodations

The mission of American Public University System is to provide high quality higher education with emphasis
on educating the nation's military and public service communities by offering respected, relevant, accessible, affordable, and student-focused online programs that prepare students for service and leadership in a diverse, global society.

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