



Writing for Digital Media • IMED 1359

Fall 2011 • CRN 57233

West Loop Center, Room 136 • Tue/Thu, 11:30 a.m.–1:20 p.m.

3 Semester Credit Hours (2 lecture, 4 lab) • 96 hours (32 lecture, 32 lab, 32 Web enhancement) • 16 weeks

Instructor: Paul Roberts • Telephone: 713.718.7892 • Email: paul.roberts@hccs.edu

Office: West Loop Room 139A

Office Hours: Mon–Thu, 9:00–9:30, and 1:30–2:00, or by appointment

Digital Communication Department Web site: <http://swc2.hccs.edu/digicom/>

Class Web site: <http://hccs.blackboard.com>

Email for assignments submission only: roberts.hccs@yahoo.com

Office Location and Hours

Your performance in this class is important to me. Please communicate with me concerning problems you are experiencing in the course before your grade suffers. I am available to discuss your concerns and other course matters.

Course Description

Written communication for digital media environments including professional Web sites or other digital content. (Co-requisite: ARTC 1325 and ARTC 1305, or Departmental Approval.)

Course Goal

Students will demonstrate acquisition of research and writing skills in by producing professional-quality content for the Digital Communication electronic publication *diginetXpress* and deploying it to the Internet.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Write for general or targeted audiences while using accepted standards of grammar and language
- Generate ideas for digital media content
- Gather, evaluate, and edit data to use in content development
- Use Internet technologies to publish information.

Learning Objectives

Upon satisfactorily completing the Writing for Digital Media course, you will demonstrate the following competencies:

- Utilize the Associated Press Stylebook for content, mechanics and writing style.
- Consider current events in a variety of areas of interest, including politics, social issues, science and technology, business and industry, religion, sports, entertainment.
- Conduct virtual or face-to-face interviews with subject matter experts
- Investigate and practice information gathering techniques using face-to-face interviews and using the Internet
- Analyze ethical considerations in dealing with Internet audiences and in achieving professional relationships via the Internet.
- Apply markup to writing assignments in preparation for publishing on the Internet.

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) from the U.S. Department of Labor examined the demands of the workplace and whether young people are capable of meeting those demands.

SCANS research verifies that what we call workplace know-how defines effective job performances today. This know-how has two elements: competencies and foundations. These requirements are essential preparation for all students, whether they go directly to work or plan further education.

SCANS workplace competencies and foundation skills have been integrated into Web Page Design I (IMED 1316). The following SCANS items are covered in this course:

- *Managing Resources:* Manage time; Manage materials and facilities
- *Working With Information:* Acquire/Evaluate information; Organize/maintain information; Interpret/communicate data; Process information with computers
- *Exhibiting Interpersonal Skills:* Work on teams; Negotiate with others
- *Applying System Knowledge:* N/A
- *Using Technology:* Apply technology to specific tasks
- *Demonstrating Basic Skills:* Reading; Writing; Speaking; Listening
- *Demonstrating Thinking Skills:* Creative thinking; Decision making; Problem solving; Reasoning; Seeing with the mind's eye
- *Exhibiting Personal Qualities:* Individual responsibility; Self-esteem; Sociability; Self-management; Integrity and honesty

Course Calendar

Following is a tentative outline of discussion topics and class assignments for the term.

Week One Syllabus, Wilkinson • Chapter 1

Topics: Student profiles
Introductions
Syllabus overview
Introduction to convergent journalism
Developing curiosity
News values
Types of leads
Five Ws and the H
Inverted pyramid
AP Style

Assignment: Sit for one hour in a place where people congregate and write down everything you see and hear. Submit an electronic file of your notes in Word format to the instructor via email. Be prepared to discuss your experience in class. *Due September 6.*

Assignment: Complete the leads assignment as specified on the handout you find on the Internet. Use the evaluation rubric as a checklist in completing the assignment. Submit your work in Word format to the instructor via email. *Due September 6.*

Week Two Wilkinson • Chapter 2

Topics: Basic skills and roles in convergent journalism
The complete story
Short paragraphs

Reader considerations
More on inverted pyramid
Objectivity/Use of third person
Making assumptions

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Assignment: Write a complete story from the handout you find at the class Web site. Use the evaluation rubric as a checklist in completing the assignment. Bring your work to class for classroom evaluation. Submit your work in Word format to the instructor via email. *Due September 13.*

Week Three **AP Stylebook • Briefing on Media Law**

Topics: Keeping an open mind
Journalism's ethics
Free expression
Libel
Defamation
Privacy
Other legal concerns

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Assignment: Listen to a speech that is available to you on the Internet. Take careful notes sufficient to allow you to write an accurate story reflecting the content of the speech or presentation. Cover the whole of the presentation, writing it in good journalistic style in the inverted pyramid. Use the evaluation rubric as a checklist in completing the assignment. *Note:* This is the preliminary assignment leading into the midterm assignment. Be sure to put quality to this story. Submit your work in Word format to the instructor via email. *Due September 20.*

Week Four **Use AP Stylebook**

Topics: Sources of information
Dealing with source demands
Writer's relationship with sources
Background information
Conducting the interview
Verifying sources
Quotations and paraphrasing
Attribution

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

For Discussion: The instructor will select a movie for in-class viewing. Watch the movie and discuss its implications on your conduct as a writer and your responsibilities as a media consumer.

Midterm Assignment: Choose a narrow topic from the movie presentation or speech assignment that you would like to develop. Identify and interview two credible living and local sources to begin building a story around that topic. Research two additional credible sources to make a well rounded story. Write a 1,000- to 1,500-word story using at least the four sources. Do not pad the story with meaningless words. Make each word count. A story that is well written at 1,000 words will score better than one that is loosely written at 1,500 words. Think about quality rather than quantity. *Due October 4.*

Week Five**Wilkinson • Chapters 3–4**

Topic: Attracting Internet attention
Effect of the blogosphere
Role of Internet texting
From print to Internet
Work on Midterm project. See Page 4 for information.

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Assignment: Work on midterm assignment. *Due October 4.*

Week Six**Wilkinson • Chapters 5–6**

Topics: From broadcast to Internet
Putting it together for publication
XML basics
XML, XSD, XSL, CSS explained
Story structure and use of WWML
Finding appropriate and effective keywords for search engines

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Assignment: Edit midterm WWML copy in preparation for publication in diginetXpress. This is not an optional exercise. It will affect your final grade. Submit your work in WWML format to the instructor via email.
Due October 11.

Week Seven**Wilkinson • Chapter 7**

Topics: Writing email professionally
Basics of broadcasting
Producing a Podcast
Prospectus for final story
Midterm exam

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Assignment: Watch the movie that is presented in class. The movie is chosen to provoke thoughts about current issues or conditions in the world around you. Apply the movie to your world and find a topic from the movie that is of interest to you. Keep in mind that the movie will have metaphorical qualities that you should be able to apply to something in your own experience if you give it some thought. This is your final feature story topic. Write a prospectus of about 200 words describing the topic you have chosen. Include a description of the thought process that moved you from the movie to your topic. Submit your work in a professionally written email to the instructor..
Due October 18.

Week Eight**Wilkinson • Chapters 8–9**

Topics: Basics of print
Internet information
Alternative leads
Feature stories
Human interest

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Final Feature Assignment: Identify and interview at least two living and local sources that are appropriate to your feature story. Use at least two more appropriate sources — either living or published — to round out your story. Apply an alternative to the inverted pyramid in writing your final assignment. Your work is to be written as a feature story with a feature lead. Do not use inverted pyramid. Keep it objective and in third person. Include an applicable picture with your story. Ensure that the picture is not copyrighted materials or you have written permission to use it. Write a cutline (caption) for your picture. Submit your work in Word format to the instructor via email. *Due November 1.*

Week Nine **Wilkinson • Chapter 10**

Topics: Adding media to the Web
Subjectivity balanced with facts and sources
Work on final feature story

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Assignment: Work on final feature story. *Due November 1.*

Week Ten **Wilkinson • Chapter 11**

Topics: Converging with other emerging media
Submit final features for instructor's evaluation

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Assignment: Edit final feature WWML copy in preparation for publication in *diginetXpress*. This is not an optional exercise. It will affect your final grade. Submit your work in WWML format to the instructor via email. *Due November 8.*

Week Eleven

Topics: Writing copy for Podcast
Adapting style for broadcast media

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Assignment: Edit final feature to work as a Podcast script. Be aware that wording must work well for an audio presentation. Time length must be 75–90 seconds. *Due November 15.*

Week Twelve **Audacity Documentation**

Topics: Using Audacity software
Recording sound files

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Assignment: Produce your final feature script as a Podcast. Review your Podcast and edit the production as needed for an appropriate and professional presentation. Submit the MP3 audio file to the instructor as an attachment via email. *Due November 29.*

Week Thirteen

Topics: Work on Podcast production

Assignment: Produce your final feature script as a Podcast. Review your Podcast and edit the production as needed for an appropriate and professional presentation. Submit the MP3 audio file to the instructor as an attachment via email. *Due November 29.*

Week Fourteen Wilkinson • Chapter 12

Topics: The future in convergent journalism
Editorial writing

Exercise: Complete AP Style/Libel exercise online.

Final Editorial Assignment: Use your feature story or your midterm story as the basis for an editorial. This is your chance to write what you think, but you must base your opinion on the facts you learned from your sources in the previous stories. Submit your work in Word format to the instructor via email. *Due December 6.*

Week Fifteen

Topics: Wrapping up the work on *dignetXpress*

Assignment: Edit final editorial as WWML copy in preparation for publication in *dignetXpress*. This is not an optional exercise. It will affect your final grade. Submit your work in WWML format to the instructor via email. *Due December 13.*

Week Sixteen

Topics: Edit editorial for publication

Instructional Methods

As your instructor, I regard your success as my success. I am responsible for presenting journalistic skills to you in lecture then assigning you to put those skills into practice by way of interviewing sources and searching reliable Internet sources. It is my responsibility to teach you appropriate writing style that is intended to communicate the information you acquire by means of digital media. I provide you with editing exercises to assist you in learning the writing style of the Associated Press.

I also provide you with writing assignments in which you are expected to research a topic through live interviewing and credible Internet sources. You will write copy from your research and submit them to me. My responsibility is to provide you with timely feedback to help you develop your writing skills. I also provide the medium by which your efforts will be published in our electronic periodical, *dignetXpress*.

I encourage you to think critically about topics, thus prompting the development of an objective and enquiring technique that finds facts and sets aside conjecture and rumor. This is the meat of writing reliable content for digital media as well as recognizing credible content as a consumer of such media.

These course practices are in place to assist you with your success. Take advantage of them to help get you on track of developing Web publishing skills that will serve you well not only in subsequent courses, but in your career.

I am available as your mentor. Please do not hesitate to ask for help in understanding concepts that we cover and in learning how to find solutions on your own. It is a matter of practice — lots of it.

I wish you success.

Student Assignments

You will find practice assignments for various weeks of the semester. These assignments are required for a grade. You shall have each assignment ready for classroom presentation and discussion on the due date noted. Assignments must be submitted to the instructor via email. You will receive points for each assignment completed. The total points for these assignments will amount to 20 percent of your final score.

Do not ignore this instruction: Word files — both printed and electronic — must be double-spaced with margins set at one inch. The first line of each paragraph shall be indented one-half inch. Do not place extra spacing between paragraphs. Use 10-point Times (Times New Roman) or 10-point Arial (Helvetica). Do not use designer or novelty fonts. This instruction applies to all assignments, including midterm and final projects.

You will complete four other assignments for grades—one midterm and three final projects. Each assignment must be in these forms — written in Word and WWML formats and produced as an audio file (MP3) for Podcasting. The work must be submitted to the instructor as attachments to professionally written and courteous email messages with your name, project designation, and due date. Following is the email address for submitting assignments:

roberts.hccs@yahoo.com

Note: The above email address is for submitting assignments only. If you have a concern, you may talk to the instructor face to face, leave a message on his voice mail or send a message to his HCCS email address.

Assignments must be submitted to the instructor on time as specified on the syllabus or in class. Because you are developing workforce skills, you must submit your assignments on time. Late assignments will receive a grade deduction of one letter grade for each class day they are late. No make-up assignments or extra credit work will be available.

Midterm Project

I will prepare a presentation on which you are to write a report as a separate assignment. From that assignment, you shall find a narrow topic to pursue for the next assignment. You will interview at least two live and local sources on that topic and write and report using those interview sources. Then you will expand the information with at least two additional sources, either live interviews, credible Internet resources or other credible and reliable written or recorded sources. Your work must meet the following criteria:

- At least 1,000–1,500 words in length. You must not "pad" your copy with meaningless verbiage. The writing must be "lean and mean." Make every word count. If you find you do not have enough information to satisfy the length requirement, then you need to go to more sources for more facts.
- An appropriate picture to accompany your story (optional)
- Good journalistic style as found in The Associated Press Stylebook.
- Objective writing, using only third person point of view.
- A selection of appropriate keywords to help search engines find your work.
- Submission of Word file and XML file.

Project copy due date: **October 4, 2011**

Project WWML due date: **October 11, 2011**

Final Projects

You shall complete three final projects: Feature Story, Podcast, and Editorial.

Feature Story • You will watch a thought-provoking movie. From this movie, you must find a feature story idea — one that involves current issues of human interest. Conduct at least two interviews of appropriate live and local sources to give information for your story idea. Your topic must not be a strictly technological subject. Find at least two more sources, either living and local or some other appropriate source. Your work must meet the following criteria:

- Length of 1,500–3,000 words. You must not "pad" your copy with meaningless verbiage. The writing must be "lean and mean." Make every word count. If you find you do not have enough information to satisfy the length requirement, then you need to go to more sources for more facts.
- An appropriate picture to accompany your story
- Good journalistic style as found in The Associated Press Stylebook.
- Objective writing, using only third person point of view.
- A selection of appropriate keywords to help search engines find your work.
- Submission of Word file and XML file.

Feature Story copy due date: **November 1, 2010**

Feature Story WWML due date: **November 8, 2010**

Podcast • One more segment of the assignment is to prepare its contents as an MP3 audio file for the purpose of publishing a Podcast alongside the written report. Write a script that will run about 90 seconds. This likely will involve abridging the written report. Prepare the style to enable your listeners to stay interested in your message for its duration. Once you have written the script, rehearse it identify tongue-twisters and awkward words. Edit the script to remove tricky passages and underscore content that deserves special emphasis. Here are the criteria:

- Time length of 75–91 seconds. You must not "pad" your copy with meaningless verbiage. The writing must be "lean and mean." Make every word count. You may need to abridge your written feature story.
- Good broadcast journalism style as discussed in class
- Objective writing, using only third person point of view
- Podcast of about 90 seconds, recorded in the MP3 file format

Podcast script due date: **November 15, 2010**

Podcast production due date: **November 29, 2010**

Editorial • The editorial (opinion) is based on the subject matter of your midterm story or your final feature story. It will be published in diginetXpress. You will use the same source information from the story as a basis for your opinion. The editorial must include the following requirements:

- Length of 500–1,000 words. You must not "pad" your copy with meaningless verbiage. The writing must be "lean and mean." Make every word count. If you find you do not have enough information to satisfy the length requirement, then you need to go to more sources for more facts.
- Good journalistic style as found in The Associated Press Stylebook.
- Must be opinionated but supported by facts and sources. Finally you get to use a subjective point of view if you desire.
- A selection of appropriate keywords to help search engines find your work.
- Submission of Word file and XML file.

Editorial copy due date: **December 6, 2010**

Editorial WWML due date: **December 13, 2010**

Student Assessments

As you have seen, the course has a clearly outlined set of learning outcomes. Along with those outcomes, I have a means of assessing how those outcomes will be accomplished. The following table delineates these outcomes and corresponding assessments.

Outcome	Assessment
Write for general or targeted audiences while correctly using commonly accepted standards of grammar and language.	Complete three major writing assignments, a news story, a human interest feature story and an editorial. All assignments that must adhere to the Associated Press Stylebook for content, mechanics and writing style.
Generate ideas for multimedia content.	Enterprise own story ideas, including determining questions to ask and sources to contact for interviews.
Gather, evaluate, and edit data to use in content development.	Utilize materials from at least four credible and reliable sources for each writing assignment. Determine what information gathered is useful. Acquire additional source material if needed to have what is necessary to complete the story..
Conduct virtual or face-to-face interviews with subject matter experts.	Conduct at least two face-to-face or telephone interviews for each writing assignment. Other sources may include information published in any credible and reliable media. Also instant messaging and email interviews are acceptable as long as two sources are in person or on the telephone.
Use Internet technologies to publish information.	Prepare copy in suitable format that would facilitate deployment to the Internet in written form. Also, script copy for Podcasting and produce the Podcast for deployment on the Internet.

Instructional Materials

Required Textbook and Materials

Darrell Christian and others, eds. *The Associated Press Stylebook 2011*. New York: Associated Press, 2011. [ISBN: 978-0-917360-55-8]

Jeffrey S. Wilkinson, and others. *Principles of Convergent Journalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. [ISBN-13: 978-0-19-533924-6]

Mass storage device

One ream of laser paper

Software Used

- Microsoft Word
- Web browser
- Text editor
- File compression software

HCCS Policy Statements

ADA (Students With Disabilities)

“The Disability Support Services (DSS) Office assists students with physical, learning, or emotional disabilities in developing independence and self-reliance. Services include adaptive equipment and reasonable accommodations for admissions assistance, testing, academic advising, registration, and classroom instruction. Interpreting service is provided for students who are deaf/hard of hearing and assistive technology devices are provided for students who are blind.

“HCCS is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). If you have any special needs or disabilities which may affect your ability to succeed in college classes or participate in college program/activities, please contact the DSS Office at the college you plan to attend. Upon consultation and documentation, you will be provided with reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations will be provided only after students have properly registered for services through designated disability services staff.

“It is recommended that you contact the DSS Office at least 60 days prior to the beginning of the term. Additional procedures are outlined in the HCCS Student Handbook.” (Source: Houston Community College System Catalog)

Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at the respective college at the beginning of each semester. Faculty are authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office. If you have any questions, please contact the disability counselor at your college or Donna Price at 713-718-5165. (HCCS Institutional Statement)

Students with verifiable disabilities that offer legal protection under the Americans With Disabilities Act may receive reasonable accommodations to assist in succeeding in the course. If you have a disability and wish to receive such reasonable accommodations, you must see the ADA counselor, Dr. Becky Hauri, at 713.718.7909. Without a recommendation from the DSS Office, the instructor cannot make such accommodation.

Academic Honesty

The following comes from the HCCS Student Handbook:

Students are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. Penalties and/or disciplinary proceedings may be initiated by College System officials against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty.

“Scholastic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.

“Cheating” on a test includes:

- Copying from another student’s test paper;
- Using materials during a test that are not authorized by the person giving the test;
- Collaborating with another student during a test without authority;
- Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test;
- Bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered.

“Plagiarism” means the appropriation of another’s work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own written work offered for credit.

“Collusion” means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.

VIOLATIONS

Possible punishments for academic dishonesty may include a grade of “0” or “F” on the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or recommendation for probation or dismissal from the College System. A recommendation for suspension or expulsion will be referred to the College Dean of Student Development for disciplinary disposition.

Students who wish to appeal a grade penalty should notify the instructional supervisor within 30 working days of the incident. A standing committee appointed by the College Dean of Instruction (Academic or Workforce) will convene to sustain, reduce, or reverse the grade penalty. The committee will be composed of two students, two faculty members, and one instructional administrator. A majority vote will decide the grade appeal and is final.

Student Attendance

The HCCS Catalog states, “A student may be dropped from a course for excessive absences after the student has accumulated absences in excess of 12.5% of the hours of instruction (including lecture and laboratory time).” That is equivalent to two weeks of class.

Attendance will be checked during the first 30 minutes of each class session. Your attendance is considered to be part of class participation and will affect your final grade. The instructor does not agree to issue administrative withdrawals for students who have excessive absences. Students with excessive absences will receive the grade earned up to the point of departure from the course. The instructor makes no distinction between excused and unexcused absences.

This policy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Repeated Courses

Students who repeat a course two or more times face significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. If you are considering course withdrawal because you are not earning passing grades, confer with your instructor/counselor as early as possible about your study habits, reading and writing homework, test-taking skills, attendance, course participation, and opportunities for tutoring or other assistance that might be available.

Course Withdrawals

The deadline to drop classes is 4:30 p.m. November 3.

The 2007 legislative session passed a law that limits the number of withdrawal (W grade) a student may have to six classes over the course of their entire academic career. This policy is effective for students entering higher education for the first time in Fall 2007 and subsequent terms. Withdrawals accumulated at any other Texas public higher education institution count toward the six-course total.

There are a number of permissible exceptions to the six course limit, such as personal medical emergency, emergency needs of family members, work schedules, military duty, and other exceptions as approved by the college.

Policies and procedures for implementation of this legislation are being developed and will be published as soon as they are available.

This statute applies to all Texas public colleges and universities. Therefore, HCC students affected by this statute, who have attended or plan to attend another institution of higher education, should become familiar with that institution’s policies on dropping classes.

Instructor Requirements

As your instructor, it is my responsibility to do the following:

- Provide the grading scale and detailed grading formula explain how student grades are calculated.
- Facilitate an effective learning environment through class lectures, demonstrations and lab opportunities.
- Describe projects and assignments.
- Inform students of policies such as attendance, withdrawal, tardiness and make up assignment.
- Provide course outline and class calendar, which will include a description and due dates of projects and assignments.
- Arrange time to meet with individual students before and after class as needed.

To be successful in this class, it is your responsibility to do the following:

- Attend class and participate in class discussion and activities.
- Read and comprehend the textbook.
- Complete required assignments and exams.
- Ask for help where you have questions or problems.
- Visit Blackboard Vista regularly to obtain handouts and assignments.
- Participate in discussions at Blackboard Vista.
- Keep the syllabus handy for reference when questions arise about course policies, assignments, deadlines, etc.

Program General Requirements and Objectives

- Complete and comprehend the objectives and technologies involved in all graded assignments.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply creative thinking and problem solving to all class projects and assignments.
- Complete all reading assignments pertaining to the subject matter of the course.
- Attend class regularly, missing no more than 12.5% of instruction and lab time (12 hours)
- Arrive at class promptly and be prepared with necessary books, storage media, assignments, and anything else required.
- Exhibit safe and courteous lab habits.
- Develop and share knowledge and information with fellow students.
- Participate in keeping labs clean and organized; shutting down computers when finished; abiding by lab rules; showing respect for instructors, fellow students and lab assistants.
- Participate in class discussions and critiques.
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate in a clear, coherent manner.
- Turn in all assignment on time and in the manner required by the instructor.
- Demonstrate the ability to use computer-based technology and software applications as it applies to be given class.
- Understand and be proficient in computer file management, including saving and retrieving files.
- When possible, demonstrate the ability to use and understand both Macintosh and Windows operating systems.
- Demonstrate knowledge and the ability to use applicable peripherals and storage devices.
- Develop a portfolio that illustrates concepts, techniques, and programs used in solving class assignment, including a written statement describing project concepts and processes.
- Demonstrate ability and creativity in using computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems and acquiring information.
- Accept responsibility for personal understanding of course requirements and degree plan.

HCC Grading Scale

These letter grades have corresponding percentage scores. The letter grades correspond to the percentage grades as follows:

- A = 90–100
- B = 80–89
- C = 70–79
- D = 60–69
- F = 0–59

Instructor Grading Criteria

Each assignment has a corresponding rubric available to guide you. I urge you to use the rubric. Your work will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- *Adherence to the assignment:* Although you may go beyond the demands of the assignment, you must meet the outlined requirements. If the assignment is not clear to you, it is your responsibility to ask for clarifications before doing it.
- *Adherence to deadline:* Deadlines in the publishing field are essential to success and are just plain good business. While flexibility with grade demerits is possible on work through the semester, deadlines on final assignments and exams are not flexible. Allowing you to extend a deadline at the end of the semester holds up processes beyond the instructor's control. That shall not happen under any circumstance. Learn to meet deadlines throughout the semester rather than training yourself to push beyond the limits.
- *Appropriateness:* Follow the assignment guidelines and matters of good taste.
- *Level of difficulty:* More sophisticated work may receive higher scores.
- *Layout:* Consider balance of elements, use of white space, skillful use of fonts, sizes and style.
- *Quality of Execution:* Strive for excellence. All work should be an attempt at portfolio quality. Only work deemed by the instructor to be of portfolio quality will receive an A grade.

Using the above criteria, your work will be assessed on five levels:

- A Exceptional (*This means you have gone beyond the requirements and have reached portfolio quality.*)
- B Excellent (*This means you have met the requirements.*)
- C Acceptable (*This means your work is average and needs improvement.*)
- D Not good enough (*Although it is passing, it shows a lack of interest in developing workforce skills.*)
- F Fail (*Why did you bother?*)

You will be able to find your final grade by going to the HCCS Web site at <http://www.hccs.edu/>. The course grade will be based on the following:

- Participation 10 percent
- Assignments..... 10 percent
- Midterm project 20 percent
- Final feature 30 percent
- Podcast of final feature ... 15 percent
- Final editorial..... 15 percent

Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System

At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time, you will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your

professors and division chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term.

Course Requirements

Students must complete the following:

- Conduct face-to-face interviews with information sources.
- Organize interview information into readable text for publication on the Web.
- Participate in a team publication that includes original information.
- Write reports using journalistic style that works for a target multimedia audience.
- Script a written report for Podcast production.
- Optimize writing style to enhance search engine success.

Course/Lab Policies

- No handwritten work will be accepted.
- Work turned in past the deadline will receive a failing grade.
- No make-up tests or classroom exercises will be given.
- Information covered in class will not be repeated for tardy or absent students.
- Plagiarism is inexcusable and will result in an automatic F for the course.
- Lab time provided during class is for this course only. Students remaining for lab must use the time for this course. Those doing other work will be asked to leave.
- No software, hardware, or manuals may be removed from the lab. Software and manuals may not be copied. Lab rules are to be strictly followed. Failure to comply with these rules will mean expulsion from both class and lab.
- No food or drink is allowed in the labs for the protection of the equipment.
- Only those currently registered for courses are allowed to use the HCC computer labs. No children, spouses, parents or friends are allowed in the labs. Children especially are not allowed on campus at any time. This is college policy and there are no exceptions.
- Students are required to sign-in and carry their student ID or paid receipt when they are in an open lab. If you are asked to show your ID or receipt to a lab aide and cannot do so, you may not be allowed to remain in the lab.
- No outside software is allowed on HCC computers.
- Open labs are for students to work on school work only. If you have outside work to do, numerous commercial centers are located throughout the city where computer time is available for a fee. Students working on projects other than those assigned for class work will be asked to leave.
- Computers with a scanner attached are reserved for scanning only.
- Students may not change mice or connect peripherals to any computer.
- We expect patrons of the lab to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Those who cannot do so will be asked to leave. When asked to leave, students must do so without argument. This is especially true at closing time.
- Silence cell phones and pagers while in class and lab. Interrupting a class for your telephone call is extremely rude and may be treated in like manner. If you must talk on the phone, please leave the classroom before answering a call or beginning a conversation.
- The use of voice recording devices in the lab is permitted only with the written recommendation from the ADA counselor as a reasonable accommodation intended to assist a student with disabilities to succeed in the course. Use of voice recording devices without such documentation is strictly prohibited.
- Once each class session begins, the door will be closed and will not be opened during lectures and demonstrations. If you arrive for class after lecture/demonstration has begun, you will not be admitted. If you need to leave the room during a lecture or demonstration, you will not be re-admitted until after the lecture/demonstration is complete.

Students may find the following information in the student handbook and college catalog:

- Withdrawal Policy
- Refund Policy
- Plagiarism Policy
- Attendance Requirements
- Grading Scale

“The Houston Community College System seeks to provide equal educational opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or handicap. This policy extends to employment, admission, and all programs and activities supported by the College.”

Dates to Remember

August 27	Classes begin
August 27 – September 13	70 percent refund for classes dropped
August 30	Registration ends / Last day to add/swap classes
September 5	Labor Day holiday (Classes and offices closed)
September 14 – September 19	25 percent refund for classes dropped
October 14	Priority deadline for Spring 2012 Financial Aid Award
October 14	Priority deadline for Fall completion of degree/certificate
November 3.....	Last day for administrative / student withdrawals (4:30 p.m.)
November 23.....	No night classes before Thanksgiving
November 24–27.....	Thanksgiving holidays (Classes and office closed)
December 1.....	Veteran's Advanced Pay Application deadline for Spring session
December 11.....	Instruction ends
December 13.....	Final examination

Acknowledgment of Syllabus/Consent Statement

Please fill in the following information and return this page to the instructor before leaving class. This is your acknowledgement that you have received a copy of the syllabus.

Student Name: _____

Student ID Number: _____

Student Home Phone: _____

Student Work Phone: _____

I have read and understand the contents of the course syllabus for *IMED 1359—Writing for Digital Media*.

Student Signature: _____ .Date: _____