

MCOM 4325—Multimedia Writing/Storytelling
Monday/Wednesday 4:00 p.m.-5:20 p.m. (HPR 274)
Syllabus—Fall 2015

I. Faculty Information

- Instructor: Rauf Arif
- Office: HPR 264
- Office Hours: Fridays 11:10 a.m.-2:10 p.m., or by appointment.
- Phone: 903-566-7364
- [E-mail: rarif@uttyler.edu](mailto:rarif@uttyler.edu)

II. Course Overview

- Multimedia Writing/Storytelling (MCOM 4325) teaches basic skills to create multimedia journalism projects. Multimedia stories will incorporate text, images, audio, video and data visualizations. You will apply standards of journalistic reporting and writing to your work throughout the semester. Whether you plan to work at a newspaper, television station, radio station, or PR/advertising agency, you need to be able to write for multiple platforms. Multimedia Writing and Storytelling (MCOM 4325) provides you those skills. This course has a specific emphasis on writing for broadcast and the web. You will learn how to write video stories, audio stories, and interactive web stories. Pre-requisites: JOUR/MCOM 3303 or JOUR/MCOM 3395.

III. Course Objectives

- You will be able to write correctly and clearly using the formats and compelling storytelling styles appropriate for the audiences and purposes for public relations/integrated communication or multimedia journalism.
- You will learn about the strengths and weaknesses of telling journalistic stories with different media and apply those skills to analyzing and developing your own content.
- You will learn how to develop journalistic stories for different media.
- You will develop skills using multiple software and hardware for creating multimedia stories.
- Analyze writing practices, strategies, and procedures for multiple forms of news production.
- Demonstrate an understanding of digital medium requirements through written assignments, including research, scripts, and projects.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and proficiency with the skills needed to make practical

producing decisions.

- Students will be able to conduct research and evaluate information using methods appropriate to public relations/integrated communication or multimedia journalism professions.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of and be able to apply the First Amendment and other legal principles for public relations/integrated communication and/or multimedia journalism.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and issues for public relations/integrated communication and/or multimedia journalism.
- Students will understand and apply concepts and theories in the use and presentation of images and information using tools and technologies appropriate for public relations/integrated communication or mediated journalism.
- Students will be able to construct a persuasive message, adapted to the audience, purpose, and context of the situation.

IV. Hardware and Software

- **Recommended:** 320-gigabyte or larger portable external hard drive with FireWire 800 interface
- All other equipment used in this class is available for checkout (make sure that you are aware of the equipment checkout policy at UT, Tyler)

V. Readings

- Textbook: Al Tompkins (Second Edition). Aim for the Heart: Write, Shoot, Report and Produce for TV and Multimedia. Amazon Link: <http://www.amazon.com/Aim-Heart-Report-Produce-Multimedia/dp/1608716740>
- Book (Recommended): Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual. (Most Recent Edition)
- In addition to the textbook, readings and materials will be posted on Blackboard. You are expected to complete readings by the start of lecture in the week indicated.

Vi. Grade Allocation

i) Attendance: 10 percent

- Attendance is required in the bi-weekly class meetings.
- Three to four unexcused absences will result in an automatic half grade deduction (5 percent).

- Five or more unexcused absences will result in a full grade deduction. Missing more than five classes, without discussing the situation with me, could result in a failing grade for the course.

ii) Participation, in-class assignments and homework: 10 percent

- It is expected that you will come to classes prepared to participate. You are expected to come prepared with the necessary materials for working on your assignments.
- You cannot make up in-class work for unexcused absences.
- In-class assignments and homework include e-portfolio personalization, writing assignments, software training projects, and assignments determined by your instructor.
- Required individual meeting with me to discuss final multimedia package (week 13).

iii) Quizzes: 10 percent

- Quizzes will be given in lecture and will cover readings and lecture material. Quizzes will be unannounced.
- You cannot make up missed quizzes for unexcused absences.

iv) Multimedia analysis posts: 10 percent

- Five 250-word blog posts analyzing multimedia journalism

v) Multimedia elements: 40 percent

- Audio Story – 10 percent
- Audio Slideshow Story – 10 percent
- Video Story – 10 percent (Including Cellphone Journalism Projects)
- Data Visualization – 10 percent

vi) Final multimedia package: 20 percent

VII. Grading Scale

A	94 and above	B-	80–82	D+	67–69
A-	90–93	C+	77–79	D	63–66
B+	87–89	C	73–76	D-	60–62
B	83–86	C-	70–72	F	59 and below

VIII. Late Policy

No extensions will be given unless you have truly extenuating circumstances. In these cases, you must speak with me **before** the assignment is due to make an arrangement. Technology excuses are not acceptable. Assignments turned in late without an approved extension will be marked down a letter grade for every day late. After five days late, the assignment will earn a 0. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss assignments including questions about technology.

IX. University of Texas at Tyler Policies

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability Services

In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services office in UC 3150, or call (903) 566-7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not reenter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

HONOR CODE THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

An honorable man, impoverished though he may be in talent, cannot fail to attain success and high standing in the eyes of the world. A dishonorable man, though he is possessed of a multitude of abilities, cannot hope to escape for long the condemnation of his fellow men. –Robert Wood

The University of Texas at Tyler is committed to providing a setting for free inquiry, excellent teaching, research, artistic performances and professional public service. As a community of scholars, the University develops each individual's critical thinking skills, appreciation of the arts, humanities and sciences, international understanding for participation in the global society, professional knowledge and skills to enhance economic productivity, and commitment to lifelong learnings.²

Such a commitment to a preeminent place in higher education also requires the ethical development of the entire UT Tyler community: students, faculty members, staff members, and administrators. The UT Tyler Honor Code is crucial to these ideals. The Honor Code is the means through which to apply the ethical ideal of honorable living to the lives of the UT Tyler community. Therefore, every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace:

Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

The purpose of the UT Tyler Honor Code is to foster a commitment to honorable living, and to exhort its community members (students, staff, faculty, and administrators) to adhere not simply to the minimum standard, but to transcend the letter of the code by committing to broader ideals consistent with the spirit of the Code. The honor code has many advantages which serve to promote a relationship of trust and respect across the entire UT Tyler community. The Honor Code strives to achieve this relationship through the following goals:

- a. To assist the UT Tyler community in developing an understanding of the importance of integrity.
- b. To enable the UT Tyler community to learn and practice ethical principles.
- c. To instill in the UT Tyler community a strong desire to maintain honor in accordance with the Code.

d. To promote a level of commitment in the UT Tyler community to honorable conduct necessary to meet the ethical challenges faced throughout a lifetime of service to the global community.

e. To enable the UT Tyler community to develop essential leadership skills necessary to establish an ethical climate within their organizations.

f. To encourage members of the UT Tyler community to embrace the spirit of the honor code in their lives rather than merely verbalize endorsement.

g. To affirm that members of the UT Tyler community will not be disadvantaged for having done his or her own work while others have violated the honor code.

Educating students to take their place in the world engenders a serious responsibility for any educational institution. The University of Texas at Tyler recognizes that the future decisions made by these citizens must be grounded in ethics as well as in academic knowledge if these decisions will protect and benefit society.

For these reasons the University of Texas at Tyler takes a proactive stand and adopts an Honor code throughout the campus so that students may be equipped with an ethical framework for their future lives.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmKsbYwtrco>

Note: The syllabus is for planning purpose. The instructor reserves the right to revise/change assignments to meet course objectives and enhance students' learning in the field.