J SCHOOL – SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, COMMUNICATION AND PUBLISHING

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION AND CREATIVE WRITING
COURSE TITLE: Writing for Digital Media
COURSE CODE: CPJLWM250; LACWWM250
3 semester credits

1. DESCRIPTION

This course looks at a variety of writing practices required of digital journalists and web writers, both in style and in subject matter. Students will gain experience writing diverse types of stories: investigative, news, feature, editorial, sports, entertainment, etc. They will learn how to write effectively for a targeted audience on a variety of digital platforms (such as websites including online versions of established media and wikis, blogs, applications and social media, multi-user communities and spaces, and smart device communication), document sources in a professional way, evaluate and critique their own publications, and about how online writing affects publication and interacts with social and civic participation. This course will also give students a further understanding of the principles, ethics, and practice of journalism in increasingly digitalized formats.
This class includes experiential learning with CEMI.

2. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Explore different digital media writing formats and channels
- Conceptualize, draft, and review different digital media writing formats
- Understand the technical and stylistic features of digital media writings
- Practice writing, exploring a variety of digital media writing genres
- Explore the last trends of digital media writing
- Analyze and understand legal principles regulating writing for digital media

3. REQUIREMENTS

Foundational writing skills are not covered. Students are expected to apply a strong command of syntax, structure, and style according to the course topic.

4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, projects. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, videos, slides, guided problem solving, and experiential and/or field learning activities where applicable.

5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES
TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

- Carrol, Brian. *Writing for Digital Media*, Routledge, 2010.

The textbook is mandatory for successful completion of the course.
Where applicable, additional materials, handouts and/or notes will be provided by the instructor.

FURTHER READINGS

- Goldstein, Norm. *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*, Perseus, 2000.

LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE
Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times of the university library. Also note that the library is for consultation only and it is not possible to borrow materials. The library is equipped with a scanner and internet access so that you may save or email a digital copy of the pages needed.
Students may also utilize additional libraries and research centers within the local community:

BIBLIOTECA PALAGIO DI PARTE GUELFA
Located in Piazzetta di Parte Guelfa between Piazza della Repubblica and Ponte Vecchio. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:
http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_palagio_di_parte_guelfa/

BIBLIOTECA DELLE OBLATE
Located in via dell'Oriuolo 26. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:
www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it

THE HAROLD ACTON LIBRARY AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FLORENCE
Located in Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Please consult the library website for hours of operation. This library requires a fee-based student membership. For information: www.britishinstitute.it/en

6. FIELD LEARNING
Please consult your Official Registration for any mandatory field learning dates. Field Learning Activities cited in Official Registrations are an integral part of the course and also include an assignment that counts towards your final grade, details will be provided on the first day of class.

7. COURSE MATERIALS
No additional course materials are necessary.

8. COURSE FEES
Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. The exact amount will be communicated by the instructor on the first day of class.

9. EVALUATION – GRADING SYSTEM
10% Attendance
20% Participation and Assignments
20% Midterm Exam, Field Learning Project (if applicable), Special/Research Project (if applicable)
30% Final Exam
20% Paper/Project

A = 93-100 %, A- = 90-92%, B+= 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B-=80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C=73-76%, C- =70-72%, D = 60-69%, F= 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

10. ATTENDANCE – PARTICIPATION

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are central to the academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

Absences are based on academic hours: 1 absence equals 3 lecture hours.
Two absences: 6 lecture hours, attendance and participation grade will be impacted.
Three absences: 9 lecture hours, the final grade may be lowered by one letter grade.
Four absences: 12 lecture hours, constitutes automatic failure of the course regardless of when absences are incurred.
Please note:
- The above hours refer to lecture hours. Please note that the contact / credit hour policy in the academic catalog includes additional distribution ratios according to delivery category. Ex: 1 absence equals 6 FL/SL/Lab hours or 9 EL hours.
- Hours may be distributed in different formats according to the academic course schedules.

LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DEPARTURE
Arriving late or departing early from class is not acceptable. Two late arrivals or early departures or a combination will result in an unexcused absence. Travel is not an exceptional circumstance.

TRAVEL (OR DELAYS DUE TO TRAVEL) IS NEVER AN EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS.
It is the student's responsibility to know how many absences are incurred. If in doubt, speak with your instructor!

Participation: Satisfactory participation will be the result of contributing to class discussions by putting forth insightful and constructive questions, comments and observations. Overall effort, cooperation during group work, proper care of work space and tools, responsible behavior, and completion of assignments will be assessed. All of the above criteria also apply to Field Learning and site visits.

11. EXAMS – PAPERS – PROJECTS
Example of how exams, papers, and projects are detailed and graded:
The **Midterm** exam accounts for 20% of the final course grade. For exam time and date consult the course addendum. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.**
Format: the exam is divided into three sections:
Part I: Multiple choice questions for a total of 20 points.
Part II: Short-answer questions (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) for a total 50 points.
Part III: Essay questions (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 30 points.

The final **Paper/Project** accounts for 20% of the course grade.
- Format: topic, length, guidelines, and due date will be provided in the course addendum.
- Material for research will be available in the FUA-AUF Library in Corso Tintori 21.

The **Final** exam accounts for 30% of the final course grade. For exam time and date consult the course addendum. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.** Format: the exam is divided into three sections:
- Part I: Multiple choice questions for a total of 20 points.
- Part II: Short-answer questions (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) for a total 50 points.
- Part III: Essay questions (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 30 points.
The Final Exam is cumulative.

12. LESSONS

Lesson 1	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Introduction to the course: syllabus, objectives, course material, assignments, grades Writing for Digital Media: definition, objectives, professional features, and writing On writing well: principles and examples of good writing – theory and practical writing exercises Getting started: putting your ideas in words – stages, strategies, practice **Additional key concepts for this lecture:** socially conscious; enhanced technology; visualizing information; connected reading
Objectives	Use the basic rules of good writing Determine the intended audience and write specifically for that audience Correctly apply the fundamentals of grammar, style, and usage Avoid common writing problems
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. *Writing for Digital Media*, vii-22 Assignment: using the four skills described during lecture (see the Key concepts for this lecture above)

Lesson 2	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Digital Media Versus Analog Media – an overview Credibility, bias, identification, transparency, accountability: definition, applications, implications Linking, WWGD, and writing strategies: overview and writing practice Tools & Technology: video, flash movies, photo slideshows, discussion and chat Computer code: the building blocks of web pages **Additional key concepts for this lecture:** digital news structure and style; data gathering and analysis; online and new websites trends and development
Objectives	Understand the similarities and differences in reading styles for Web audiences and print media audiences Evaluate credibility in digital media Write in such a way that facilitates online reading through scanning Encourage and enhance readership though interactive, multimedia pages Explain what XHTML is and how it works
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. Writing for Digital Media, 23-54 Read: The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, 314-327 Assignment: Instructor will provide community-based lead for story development. Create a basic web article and prepare photo according to formatting indications.

Lesson 3	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Screen writing: online style and techniques – an overview General online style, tone, visual style, simplicity, clarity, and repetition: definitions, functions, applications Screen writings: case studies analysis Planning the pages and usability **Additional key concepts for this lecture:** the second segment of the digital writing cycle; online creative writing development; non-news online genres – i.e. literary

	journals, news periodical fiction sections
Objectives	Understand how writing techniques and style should be informed by the online environments in which the content will be presented
	Plan, organize, and test content for an interactive audience
	Help the audience navigate to and through the information
	Cultivate a sensitivity to the global reach of the Web and the implications of that reach in producing content that can be quickly, readily apprehended
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. *Writing for Digital Media*, 55-72
	Assignment: Institutional web assignment

Lesson 4	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Headlines and hypertext – an overview
	Hypertext: how to hyperlink, types of links, hyperlinking's history
	Headlines and subheads: conceptualization, writing strategies, practice
	Case studies analysis
	Additional key concepts for this lecture: the third segment of the digital writing cycle – cultural component; magazine-style feature pieces on culture and cultural storytelling; historic vs. contemporary in art history-saturated cities such as Florence
Objectives	Write effectively headlines, deckheads, subheads, and sub-subheads
	Use hyperlinks correctly to organize information, facilitate navigation, and help users access information
	Organize information in lists, both ordered and unordered, and better understand what kinds of information lend themselves to lists
	Understand how essays, long writing and text-intensive stories and articles should be presented online
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. Writing for Digital Media, 73-96
	Read: The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, 422-448
	Use provided leads to stylize an online history, food, art, or fashion feature piece based on a cultural aspect of Florence

Lesson 5	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Designing places and spaces – an overview
	Pre-planning, maximizing content fitness, content development, information architecture, basic of page layout: definition, stages, strategies
	Creating a style guide: concept, design, development
	Additional key concepts for this lecture: the fourth segment of the digital writing cycle – businesses, institutions, and organizations presence on websites; digital divulgation policy, product, and services language; corporate writing for online engagement; standards for efficient and effective approaches to technical writing
Objectives	Participate in site and page planning
	Understand audience needs and how to satisfy them
	Plan how to attract users to a site and keep them coming back for more
	Create and use style guides
	Ensure quality control for a site
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. Writing for Digital Media, 97-118
	Read: The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, 449-456
	Assignment: Analyze an event announced on the official Municipality of Florence

	website and expand into a blog-friendly piece.

Lesson 6	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Online editing, designing, and publishing – an overview Online editing step-by-step: definition, stages, strategies Case studies analysis Multimedia storytelling: definition, features, practice Content management systems: definition, operations, strategies **Additional key concepts for this lecture:** online media legal and ethical issues; fact checking and accuracy; data accessibility and public records; intellectual property rights
Objectives	Explain the fundamentals of online editing and publishing Understand the responsibilities of the editor Understand the process of publishing online Begin editing online content
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. Writing for Digital Media, 119-133 Read: The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, 328-368 Assignment: Analyze an event announced on the official Municipality of Florence website and expand into a blog-friendly piece.

Lesson 7	
Meet	In class
Lecture	MIDTERM EXAM

Lesson 8	
NA	ACADEMIC BREAK

Lesson 9	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Trends in personal publishing – overview Weblogging and Webloggers – a brief history The (blog) major leagues: talking points memo, memogate, bloggers as journalists Blogging: blogging software, blogger v. journalist debate, objectivity as a process goal, corporate blogging, media's embrace of blogs How to write for blogs: applying the blogging basics, live blogging, corrections Blogging ethics, the 'tagospehere, RSS **Additional key concepts for this lecture:** collective writing environments and projects analysis; blogs, wikis, forums and other examples of collective writing.
Objectives	Identify the principles of personal publishing Understand the blog format and why it has proliferated Describe blogging's roles in journalism Harness good blog-writing practices
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. Writing for Digital Media, 137-167 Assignment: Institutional web article assignment – group assignment

Lesson 10	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Citizen journalism – an overview Understanding the 'We' media: definition & features

	Journalism: what journalists do, jacks of many trades, and story structures Crowd-sourced journalism: partnering with the crowds, the power of folksonomies, making news fun Going mobile, twittering the news, geomapping, and widgets – definition, function(ing), examples Evolving online writing and editing roles: researcher and guide, traffic generator, online community manager, the future of journalism – definition, discussion, examples **Additional key concepts for this lecture:** digital media global reach; strategies for online organizations; local readership loyalty programs; online presence - in terms of global reach; periodical regional sections
Objectives	Recognize the new, communal ethos of social networking, and its implications for news-gathering and publishing Describe what news organizations are doing to leverage participatory journalism Explain the ethics of "citizen" or crowd-sourced journalism Discuss the future of networked information sharing, including the spread of mobile Web access and information delivery and of "cloud-based" software
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. Writing for Digital Media, 168-206 Assignment: Instructor-provided leads will be utilized to create a global and local spin on the same topic.

Lesson 11	
Meet	In class
Lecture	News as a conversation – an overview Case studies analysis Web 2.0: fostering online community, socially networking the news, types of internet-enabled interpersonal communication, email, useNet news and newsgroups, bulletin boards, chat, and community forums moderation, **Additional key concepts for this lecture:** social media and user engagement integration; traditional media and social media platforms; alternative forms of journalism (university research & news sites, news blogs); social media delivery, divulgation (vs. promotion); maintaining and moderating citizen participation
Objectives	Analyze case studies to understand how new sites are engaging readers and seeking to include them in online communities Understand how online community is enabled and maintained Explain how the architecture of the Internet and Web sites affects the nature of community, communication and the sharing of content Discuss the potential of social networking for news
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. Writing for Digital Media, 207-236 Read: The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, 369-398 Assignment: Blog assignment and copy for social media posting

Lesson 12	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Intranets, extranets, portals – an overview Intranet: special requirements of the Intranet writer, the need for style guide, size Extranets: definition, professional use, examples and applications Intra-business communication: newsletters, wikis and cloud computing, virtual networks **Additional key concepts for this lecture:** various types of visual accompaniment;

	writing adaptation and visual evolution; photo journalism; news design and execution basic; animation; words and visuals
Objectives	Determine the appropriate writing styles for online business communication Identify trends in intra-organization communication via the internet Understand how intranets, extranets, and portal function, and how they are different
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. Writing for Digital Media, 237-251 Read: The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, 467-479 Assignment: Students will be given a visual story lead to be completed as a photo portfolio for online publications. Photos must be accompanied by texts as per the assignment indications.

Lesson 13	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Learning the legal landscape: libel and privacy in a digital age – an overview Open records and open meetings: Sunshine Laws – definition, content, discussion Privacy in the Information Age: definition, implications, applications Open architecture and privacy breaches: definition, implications, applications Safeguarding data, trespass and surveillance, legislative protections of privacy – libel, slander, and defamation Copyright and Intellectual Property Issues – International Law and Global Medium – definitions, implications, applications **Additional key concepts for this lecture:** video and audio material content development and attachment; interviews/musical data integrating; word and sound/moving image relation; editing/package and execution basics for video-based writing
Objectives	Understand the legal contexts in which Web writers gather information and in which they publish, including the limits on and freedoms for both activities Discuss how privacy las has changed in and for a digital age Know the basics of intellectual property law as it relates to digital content Analyze the tensions in the laws as competing interests vie for priority Appreciate the implications of international law for publishing on a global medium
Readings/ Assignments	Read: Carroll, B. Writing for Digital Media, 252-297 Read: The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, 460-466 Final institutional web assignment - that incorporates available audio-visual material

Lesson 14	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Writing for the digital media: changing practices, trends, technological developments Presentation in class General review
Objectives	Explore latest trends of digital media writing Understand and analyze the last trends of digital media writing Present in class a personal writing for digital media project
Readings/ Assignments	Review the material covered in the course

Lesson 15	
Meet	In class

| **Lecture** | FINAL EXAM |