

## Jour 560: Message Development

### Fall 2017

8-9:15 Tu/Th; 9-10:15 Fr

101 SF

Professor Charles Marsh

### Office Hours:

After class & by appt.

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### Course Goals

1. To promote your understanding of the content, format, organization and effectiveness of diverse strategic communications messages and tactics
2. To improve the quality of your writing, including adherence to purpose, focus on targeted audience, diplomacy, organization and grammar
3. To increase your appreciation of the need for painstaking research
4. To strengthen your critical and creative thinking abilities
5. To help you begin building a professional portfolio by offering opportunities to complete real assignments for real clients
6. To prepare you for the message development duties of Strategic Campaigns (Jour 640)

### Required Books and Sources

- *Strategic Writing*, third edition, by Marsh, Guth and Short
- A Primer on AP Style by Professor Doug Ward (download for free from the Course Documents folder of this course's Blackboard site).

### Class Policy on Attendance

Attendance in Jour 560 is mandatory – both for lectures and labs. Sometimes, however, an absence is unavoidable. If an explanation (in advance, if possible) is reasonable and the absence is rare, your course grade will not be affected. Three unexcused absences will lower the course grade by one letter. Five late appearances will have the same effect.

### Course Requirements and Grading

<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
Personal profile	0
SMP-Part I	2.5 percent
SMP Part I-	2.5 percent
Product Demonstration Video	10 percent
Bad-news letter	2.5 percent
News release 1	2.5 percent
News release 2	2.5 percent

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Blog/Twitter assignment	2.5 percent
Print and digital ad	12.5 percent
Radio ad (partnered)	10 percent
TV ad (partnered)	10 percent
Final Project (partnered)	
SMP draft	0
SMP final	5 percent
Print ad/copy draft	5 percent
Radio ad/script	5 percent
TV ad/script	5 percent
Midterm Exam	12.5 percent
Grammar/Style Quiz 1	2 percent
Grammar/Style Quiz 2	2 percent
Grammar/Style Quiz 3	2 percent
Grammar/Style Quiz 4	2 percent
Grammar/Style Quiz 5	2 percent
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 percent</b>

### **Important Note on Assignment Grades and Overall Semester Grade**

Rather than points (which some sections of Jour 560 use), you'll earn a letter grade for each written assignment. Each assignment will count as a percentage of your semester grade, rather than as a specific number of points.

In the above list of assignments, these are exactly the same percentages as in the sections of Jour 560 using points instead of letter grades for written work. Your grading system isn't any harder than other sections of Jour 560.

Here's the reason for this policy: In a points-grading system for your written assignments, the first news release assignment, for example, is 2.5 percent of your grade (or 25 points in the point system). In the points-grading system, I'd honestly have difficulty determining and explaining to you the exact difference between a score of 17 points or of 18 points. But I can, with confidence, say that the release was excellent (an A) or good but flawed (a B-) or slightly above basic competency (a C+) – and so on.

Some of this letter-grade approach comes from my professional experience: I never had a boss say, "Hey, that news release was a 22 out of 25." But he or she would say, "Hey, that was a very good news release, but to make it even better, I want you to add...." Very good would mean a B+.

This Jour 560 syllabus has a section on what the basic letter grades mean.

To calculate your semester grade, simply change the letter grade for each assignment to a number:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

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Then multiply that number by the percentage of the assignment. For example, if you earned a B- on the sales letter, you would multiply 8 x 2.5. That would equal 20. At the end of the semester, your total number might be something like 978. Because you used percentages (as a number, 2.5 percent is really 0.025), move the decimal point two places to the left – and you have 9.78. If your attendance and other aspects of professionalism were good, that total would round up: It would be a B+ for the semester because it's closer to a 10 than a 9.

Here's how the quiz scores will work. (This matches the grading scale our syllabus.)

100%	99%	98%	97%	96%	95%	94%	93%	92%	91%	90%
12.5	12.357	12.214	12.071	11.928	11.785	11.642	11.51	11.5	11.0	10.51

89%	88%	87%	86%	85%	84%	83%	82%	81%	80%
10.25	10.0	9.5	9.26	9.01	8.76	8.51	8.5	8.0	7.51

79%	78%	77%	76%	75%	74%	73%	72%	71%	70%
7.25	7.0	6.5	6.26	6.01	5.76	5.51	5.5	5.0	4.51

69%	68%	67%	66%	65%	64%	63%	62%	61%	60%
4.25	4.0	3.5	3.26	3.01	2.76	2.51	2.5	2.0	1.51

59 - 0
1.0

If your attendance, your class participation, and other aspects of professionalism have been strong, your grade can round up. That is, a 10.51 would be an A- rather than a B+ because it's closer to the higher grade (11) than the lower (10).

**\*\*\* I will prepare and distribute an Excel spreadsheet so that you can keep track of your grades.**

### **Grading Standards**

Strong research, compelling language and images, exceptional storytelling and reporting, word flow, style and adherence to strategy can boost work. Fact errors, incomplete research, poor organization, grammar/spelling/usage errors, weak verbs, weak leads, unsound strategic judgment, poor diplomacy and word choice, or failure to follow proper style and format will lower your grade.

**A = Outstanding.** This grade rewards professional caliber work (publishable or broadcast-ready). The writing is clear, well organized and stylish; it requires virtually no editing. Complete research leaves no significant questions unanswered. The work needs no changes before submission to clients or editors. These strategic messages get results,

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win awards and, when appropriate, feature creative concepts; they are executed with focus on strategy, interesting presentation and nearly flawless writing.

**B = Good.** This grade reflects work that could be raised to professional standards without extensive editing. **You may write documents with no errors that earn a "B."**

Grammatically correct writing may lack the sparkle and fine organization of "A" work. The research answers the main questions but may miss the proper emphasis or the best sources. The work needs minor revisions in such areas as reorganizing, rewriting, reformatting or providing more or better research or sources. "B" work doesn't necessarily have anything wrong, but it could be better, often with a stronger topic or subject, a more artistic presentation, better information or improved writing. "B" work demonstrates basic broadcast or print style.

**C = Adequate.** This work indicates a problem in at least one area, such as research, analysis, grammar, diplomacy, strategy or basic writing/editing. It does not measure up to professional quality but could be saved by more extensive revision. These messages may have weak ideas, concepts or presentation. They draw attention because they don't quite do the job. In summary, the work may be what a boss would call a first draft.

**D = Unacceptable.** This work falls clearly below acceptable standards, even in a classroom setting. The research and analysis may be unprofessional, and the writing could remain unclear and/or ungrammatical. The work may contain factual errors and/or omissions or may show little concept of basic strategic judgment.

**F = Failing.** This grade reflects totally unacceptable work. Whether the research fails to convey useful information or the writing fails to convey meaning, for whatever reason, "F" work conveys the impression that the student did not take the assignment seriously. Such performance is often the result of personal or time-management problems that extend beyond a lack of skills or understanding of the research, writing or production processes. Major factual errors and failure to meet deadlines also characterize failing work.

### **Jour 560 Statement on Professionalism**

It can be hard to separate good manners, good ethics and professionalism. In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do, individually or as a team, must be original and reflect your own ideas and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you would be fired. In a J-School class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you will fail the course, and you may be expelled from the School.

Your professors expect you to behave professionally in class, in groups and in production laboratories – and you have the right to expect the same from them. Failing to work well with partners is unprofessionalism. Please do not get up and leave the room in the middle

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of class unless absolutely necessary. Any poorly mannered or disruptive behavior is unprofessional and can affect your semester grade.

With lab work, your professors expect you to check out and return equipment on time and in good condition, and you are required to cancel any unneeded equipment or lab reservations. Filing your work as instructed and on time counts under professionalism. Another part of professionalism is completing the School-wide grammar assessment online. If, for any reason, you fall short of professional standards, your instructor has the right to adjust an assignment grade or a semester grade.

### **Communications**

You are responsible for checking Blackboard before every lecture and lab. Your assignments and lecture slides (when available) will be posted.

### **Computers and Phones**

Please put your phones away for this class unless they're needed for an assignment. You may use laptops for taking notes if you wish, but please don't visit unrelated websites during class. That's not only a distraction for you: It can distract classmates and the instructor.

### **School Laboratories**

The School provides computer and broadcast laboratories for student use. Adequate laboratory resources are available for students who complete their assignments in a timely manner. The hours for the computer lab in 105 Stauffer-Flint are posted outside the lab. Computers are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Hours for the Weir Production Laboratory are posted in the Dole Center. Students may sign up for editing time and equipment on a first-come, first-served basis on the online reservation system at <http://journalism.ku.edu/dole-center>. Sign-up instructions are on the website. Remember, all posted lab times are subject to change. Plan to work Monday through Friday.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials: "A delayed start or class cancellation on the Lawrence campus will be announced after 6 a.m. Check [alert.ku.edu](http://alert.ku.edu) or the [KU homepage](http://ku.edu); check [twitter.com/KUNews](https://twitter.com/KUNews); call KU's Inclement Weather Policy Line, 864-SNOW, or KU Info, 864-3506; or listen to local broadcast media."

### **Students with Individual Needs**

If you have any learning disability that may affect your performance in this course, please see your professor during the first week of class.

Student Access Services, 22 Strong Hall, 785-864-4064 ([achieve@ku.edu](mailto:achieve@ku.edu)), coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted Student

Access Services, please do so as soon as possible. Information about services can be found at <http://access.ku.edu/>. Please also contact me privately in regard to this course.

### **Academic Misconduct**

This class will observe the university's policy on academic misconduct -- both for students and for the instructor -- as published in the online "Student Rights and Responsibilities" (<http://www.policy.ku.edu/student-affairs/student-rights-responsibilities-code>)

In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. As noted above, any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas and research. In a work setting, if a person chooses to violate professional standards, he or she will be fired. In this class, if someone chooses to violate the standards for academic integrity, he or she will fail the course and might be expelled from or denied admission to the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Here is the School of Journalism's official policy statement:

### **Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification**

*Adopted May 7, 2004:*

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor(s) of this course.

*The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.*

### **Plagiarism**

Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (for example, without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

### **Fabrication and Falsification**

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

In this course, the penalty for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification is a failing grade for the semester. Additional penalties can include expulsion from the School of Journalism.

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If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor of this course.”

The KU University Senate defines plagiarism as “knowingly presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.” The University defines fabrication and falsification as “unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.”

Here is more clarification:

- If you use or attempt to use any unauthorized materials during a test, or if you give any unauthorized materials to someone else during a test, this is cheating. Unauthorized materials include written materials, such as notes. Unauthorized materials include any forms of nonverbal communication (one cough, the answer is A; two coughs, the answer is B).
- Plagiarism is stealing. You take someone else’s ideas, thoughts, or words, and you present them as your own original work. This includes taking ideas from written sources, such as books, as well as materials on the Internet. Cutting and pasting materials from the Internet and presenting that work as if it were your own is plagiarism. There may be times when you want to incorporate another person’s ideas, opinions, and words into the papers you write, to make a point or to provide background. If you do, it is essential that you attribute that information—that you explain where the information came from and give credit where credit is due. “Recycling” past interviews or research from previous J101 students and presenting it as your own falls into the category of plagiarism.
- Fabrication and falsification mean that you made it up. This can include making up an entire interview or embellishing a fact, quote, or statistic to make it sound better. Don’t do it.

We will discuss these issues further in class. If you have any questions, contact your professors or teaching assistants.

### **Original Work**

The expectation when you come to this class is that you have come to learn, to be creative, to stretch your imagination, and expand your skills. Therefore, all the work you do in this class must be original. That means no “recycling” of assignments or papers from other classes in the J-School or outside the J-School. Do not recycle old high school assignments. Do not recycle research papers, news stories or marketing plans. If you wrote a news story on Jayhawk alums who served in Afghanistan for a class last semester, you cannot revise that slightly and resubmit it as a new assignment. If you conducted a research study on how companies respond to crisis, you cannot modify that and submit it to your professors.

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We assume the work you do for this class is original to this class. Any efforts to recycle material will be regarded as academic dishonesty.

### **School of Journalism Policy on Classroom Attendance**

No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester (Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>). Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent. The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting.

The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid. Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid.

### **Diversity**

Think about the relationship between media and audiences and learn how to meet the needs of diverse audiences. In this class, it is important that you feel comfortable expressing ideas and opinions. We welcome and encourage you to share differing perspectives and diverse experiences and to be respectful of others whose viewpoints and experiences may not be the same as your own.

### **Concealed Weapons Policy**

Individuals who choose to carry concealed handguns are solely responsible to do so in a safe and secure manner in strict conformity with state and federal laws and KU weapons policy. Safety measures outlined in the KU weapons policy specify that a concealed handgun:

- Must be under the constant control of the carrier.
- Must be out of view, concealed either on the body of the carrier, or backpack, purse, or bag that remains under the carrier's custody and control.
- Must be in a holster that covers the trigger area and secures any external hammer in an un-cocked position
- **Must have the safety on, and have no round in the chamber.**

### **Tests and Quizzes**

Instructors are allowed by Kansas Board of Regents policy, to require backpacks, purses and other bags be placed in a nearby location specified by the professor during exams and quizzes, and as such those items will not be under the constant control of the individual. Students who choose to carry a concealed handgun in a

purse, backpack, or bag must review and plan each day accordingly, and are responsible for making alternate arrangements as necessary. The university does not provide appropriate secured storage for concealed handguns.

Individuals who violate the KU weapons policy may be asked to leave campus with the weapon and may face disciplinary action under the appropriate university code of conduct.

### Copying or Recording of Classroom Lectures

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the university's property. Video and audio recording of lectures without instructor consent is prohibited. On request, the instructor usually will permit students to audiotape lectures, on the condition that these audiotapes are used only as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless the instructor gives written permission, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Readings</b> SW= <i>Strategic Writing</i> AP= <i>Primer on AP Style</i>	<b>Labs (and Most Due Dates)</b>
<b>August</b>			
T-22	Introduction to Message Development	AP: pp. 1-2	<b>Lab week 1:</b> Introductions and expectations In lab: personal profile
R-24	Research and Strategic Message Planners (SMPs); Project/time management. <i>Assign: SMP</i>	SW: pp. 1-10, 119-132	
T-29	Video storytelling and the grammar of video. <i>Assign: Product Demonstration Video (individual assignment)</i>	SW: Appendix A/Part 1 (pp. 235-241) & AP pp. 1-2	<b>Lab week 2:</b> Video Editing with Heather Lawrenz. Demo Premier software, J-Tech resources
R-31	Audience analysis and segmentation	SW: pp. 105-118	
<b>September</b>			
T-5	<i>Owned Media:</i> Content marketing and feature writing	AP: pp. 3-5	<b>Lab week 3:</b> <b>Quiz 1</b> <i>Assign Blog</i>
R-7	Blogs, web and social writing. <i>Assign: blog/Twitter</i>		
T-12	<i>Earned Media:</i> News releases, online newsrooms	SW: pp. 43-75	<b>Lab week 4:</b> Due: SMP-Part 1 <i>Assign: News Release 1</i>
R-14	Persuasive Writing	SW: pp. 32-33 SW: pp. 41-61	
T-19	Print Ad Writing, <i>Assign print ad</i>	SW pp. 133-138, Appendix A/Part 2 (pp. 241-247) & AP pp. 3-5	<b>Lab week 5:</b> <i>Assign: News Release 2</i>
R-21	Print Ad design	SW: pp. 21-23	

T-26	<i>Paid Media: Advertising approaches and appeals</i>	SW: pp. 24-26	<b>Lab week 6:</b> <b>Quiz 2</b> Due: SMP-2 Due: Product Demonstration Video
R-28	Diversity in Strategic Communication	SW: pp. 30-31	
<b>October</b>			
T-3	Broadcast/podcast writing <i>Radio ad assigned (group)</i>	SW: pp. 11-15 SW: Appendix B (pp. 248-252)	<b>Lab week 7:</b> <b>Quiz 3</b> Due: Print ads
R-5	To be announced. (J-School Generations Guest??)		

T-10	Radio ad production	SW: pp. 139-143	<b>Lab Week 8:</b> Creativity exercise applied to radio/TV ad.
R-12	Television continuity <i>Assign TV ad</i>	SW: pp. 144-159	
T-17	<b>Fall Break</b>		<b>Lab Week 9:</b> No Labs this week.
R-19	Strategic planning	SW: pp. 167-173	<b>Lab week 10:</b> <b>Quiz 4;</b> Due: Radio Ads;
T-24	Discussion of final project <i>Assign: Final Project (group assignment)</i>	SW: Appendix C (pp. 253-255)	
R-26	Business communication	SW: pp. 199-201	
T-31	Customer communication (bad-news & sales letters)	SW: pp. 177-182, 208-212	<b>Lab week 11:</b> In lab writing assignment: Bad-news business letter
<b>November</b>			
R-2	Social Media Trends		<b>Lab week 12:</b> <b>Quiz 5</b> Due: TV ads
T-7	Crisis Communication		
R-9	Ethics in Strategic Communication	SW: pp. 26-29	<b>Lab week 13:</b> Due: SMP drafts & Blog assignment
T-14	Campaigns preview		
R-16	<b>Midterm Exam</b>		<b>Lab week 14:</b> No labs this week
T-21	No class – Groups work on final projects		
R-23	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>		<b>Lab week 15:</b> No lab, consultations
T-28	Group consultations and work on final project		
R-30	Group consultations and work on final project		
<b>December</b>			
T-5	Students work on final project – no lecture		<b>Final Exam Period</b> Due: Final Projects
R-7	Students work on final project – no lecture		