

AG 351 – Section 001

Communicating Agriculture to the Public

Fall 2021 | Course Credits: 3

TR 2 – 3:20 p.m. | Furman Hall 105



Instructor:

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Office hours: Flexible and by appointment

Course Meeting Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2 – 3:20 p.m., Furman Hall 105

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description: In this course, students will explore various outlets for communicating with the public about agriculture using appropriate, professional writing. Additionally, students will articulate their thoughts on controversial issues as well as write feature and editorial pieces promoting positive agricultural practices and people in agriculture. This course will fulfill the Social Processes and Institutions requirement in the Baccalaureate Core Perspectives category or the Contemporary Global Issues requirement in the Baccalaureate Core Synthesis category.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites or corequisites required for this course.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Communicate effectively using a variety of writing styles.
2. Identify the needs and expectations of an audience, and prepare written documents appropriate for the intended audience.
3. Investigate multiple perspectives of a controversial topic in agriculture or natural resources and articulate the complexities associated with the issue using credible sources in an accurate and professional manner.
4. Think critically about agricultural issues, discuss broader implications, and develop relevant communication materials.
5. Critique written materials and provide recommendations for improvement.

Baccalaureate Core Learning Outcomes: This course fulfills the Baccalaureate Core requirement for the social processes and institutions, and contemporary global issues categories.

Social Processes & Institutions Baccalaureate Core Learning Outcomes

- BC1.** Use theoretical frameworks to interpret the role of the individual within social process and institutions.
- BC2.** Analyze current social issues and place them in historical context(s).
- BC3.** Critique the nature, value and limitations of the basic methods of the social sciences.

Contemporary Global Issues Baccalaureate Core Learning Outcomes

- BC4.** Analyze the origins, historical contexts, and implications of contemporary global issues.
- BC5.** Explain the complex nature and interdependence of contemporary global issues using a multi-disciplinary approach.
- BC6.** Articulate in writing a critical perspective on contemporary global issues using evidence as support.

Methods for assessing expected learning outcomes include: writing assignments, course meeting activities, peer reviews, quizzes, reports, and other projects detailed below.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Required Resources:

- **Microsoft Word** – This software package includes essential software tools to help you complete writing assignments in this course.
- **Canvas** – Course materials, assignment sheets, examples, grades, and other items will be posted via the course Canvas site.
- **Email** – Communication via email will also be utilized during this course. Please check your email regularly for class announcements and updates.

Recommended Optional Resources:

- *Associated Press Stylebook.* (2019). New York: The Associated Press.
- Brooks, B. S., Pinson, J. L., & Wilson, J. G. (2019). *Working with words: A handbook for media writers and editors* (10th Ed). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Technical Assistance: If you experience any errors or problems while in your online course, contact 24-7 Canvas Support through the Help link within Canvas. If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, or need assistance logging into a course, contact the IS Service Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-8787 or visit the [IS Service Desk](#) online.

COURSE POLICIES

Deadlines and Late Assignments: To receive consideration for full credit, assignments must be submitted on Canvas on or before the due date that is described on the assignment rubric or in this class syllabus. Late assignments will be accepted up to 24 hours after they are due at a 50% point loss without prior communication to the instructor. If you know you will be busy when an assignment is due, work ahead to turn it in early. If an emergency arises that requires you to turn an assignment in late, email Dr. Lawson as soon as possible in order to work toward a solution. For absences related to university functions, work with the instructor at least one week in advance to develop a plan to complete any missed work.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities: Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval, please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at <http://ds.oregonstate.edu>. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

Statement Regarding Religious Accommodation: Oregon State University is required to provide reasonable accommodations for employee and student sincerely held religious beliefs. It is incumbent on the student making the request to make the faculty member aware of the request as soon as possible prior to the need for the accommodation. See the [Religious Accommodation Process for Students](#).

Expectations for Student Conduct: Student conduct is governed by the university's policies, as explained in the Student Conduct Code (<https://beav.es/codeofconduct>). Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility.

Academic Integrity: Integrity is a character-driven commitment to honesty, doing what is right, and guiding others to do what is right. Oregon State University students and faculty have a responsibility to act with integrity in all of our educational work, and that integrity enables this community of learners to interact in the spirit of trust, honesty, and fairness across the globe. Academic misconduct, or violations of academic integrity, can fall into seven broad areas, including but not limited to: cheating; plagiarism; falsification; assisting; tampering; multiple submissions of work; and unauthorized recording and use.

It is important that you understand what student actions are defined as academic misconduct at Oregon State University. The OSU Libraries offer a [tutorial on academic misconduct](#), and you can also refer to the [OSU Student Code of Conduct](#) and [the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standard's website](#) for more information. More importantly, if you are unsure if something will violate our academic integrity policy, ask your professors, GTAs, academic advisors, or academic integrity officers.

TurnItIn: Your instructor may ask you to submit one or more of your writings to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service. Your assignment content will be checked for potential plagiarism against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other OSU students, for common or borrowed content. Turnitin generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in your paper. The report may be submitted directly to your instructor or your instructor may elect to have you submit initial drafts through Turnitin, and you will receive the report allowing you the opportunity to make adjustments and ensure that all source material has been properly cited. Papers you submit through Turnitin for this or any class will be added to the OSU Turnitin database and may be checked against other OSU paper submissions. You will retain all rights to your written work. For further information, visit [Academic Integrity for Students: Turnitin – What is it?](#)

Tutoring and Writing Assistance: TutorMe is a leading provider of online tutoring and learner support services fully staffed by experienced, trained and monitored tutors. Access TutorMe from within your Canvas course menu. The Oregon State [Online Writing Suite](#) is also available for students enrolled in Ecampus courses.

Ecampus Reach Out for Success: University students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor or academic advisor. Learn about [resources that assist with wellness and academic success](#). Ecampus students are always encouraged to discuss issues that impact your academic success with the [Ecampus Success Team](#). Email ecampus.success@oregonstate.edu to identify strategies and resources that can support you in your educational goals. If you feel comfortable sharing how a hardship may impact your performance in this course, please reach out to me as your instructor.

- **For mental health:** Learn about [counseling and psychological resources for Ecampus students](#). If you are in immediate crisis, please contact the Crisis Text Line by texting OREGON to 741-741 or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
- **For financial hardship:** Any student whose academic performance is impacted due to financial stress or the inability to afford groceries, housing, and other necessities for any reason is urged to contact the Director of Care for support (541-737-8748).

GRADING & ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

Descriptions and rubrics for each assignment will be made available to students on Canvas ahead of assignment deadlines. Grading will be based upon the requirements and criteria outlined in the assignment descriptions and rubrics. Your grades will be posted on Canvas. All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the date listed on the course schedule unless noted otherwise.

Written Work Guidelines: All written work is expected to follow proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation (GSP) standards. Spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors in written assignments will result in point deductions. Please proofread your work. Do not rely on spellcheck to catch all GSP mistakes in your work. You are expected to use the Associated Press (AP) Style Manual for all assignments.

Grading scale: The following grading scale percentages will be used in this class:

A = 92.5-100 A - = 89.5-92.4 B+ = 86.5-89.4 B = 82.5-86.4 B- = 79.5-82.4 C+ = 76.5-79.4
C = 72.5-76.4 C- = 69.5-72.4 D+ = 66.5-69.4 D = 62.5-66.4 D- = 59.5-62.4 F = 0-59.4

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Due Date	Assignment	Points Possible
Throughout	Class discussion and participation	110
Throughout	Free Writes (2 @ 20 points each)	40
Throughout	Ag in the Media Critiques (4 @ 20 points each)	80
Sept. 23	Introduction Project	20
Oct. 10	Case Study Application 1	50
Oct. 17	Feature Story Preparation Activities	100
Oct. 24	Peer Personality Profile and Interview	100
Oct. 31	Feature Story Draft	50
Oct. 31	Active Voice Activity	30
Nov. 4	Midterm Exam	75
Nov. 7	Feature Story Peer Review	25
Nov. 14	Infographic	40
Nov. 21	Case Study Application 2	50
Nov. 28	Blog and Social Media Posts	75
Dec. 5	Peer Review / Writing Consultation	30
Dec. 5	Final Feature Story	125
1000 Total Points Possible		

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

The descriptions located below are meant to provide a high-level description of the assignment. More specific details about the assignments and expectations will be available on Canvas.

Class discussion and Participation: Participation and attendance during class sessions is key to your success. Up to ten points per week may be awarded based upon attendance and engagement. There may sometimes be short graded activities, as well.

Free Writes: Free writes provide you an opportunity to write freely your thoughts and ideas about a topic. Think of it as a brainstorm and brain dump.

Ag in the Media Critiques: It is important to be aware of agricultural issues and how they are portrayed in the media. For these assignments, you will find an example of agriculture in the media (newspaper, television, magazine, podcast, etc.) and include an analysis of the article in terms of its relative bias and portrayal of agriculture.

Introduction Project: This project is designed to help me get to know you better. Download, complete, and submit the student information form from Canvas.

Case Study Application Activities 1 and 2: The case studies will apply theories and concepts to issues and situations unfolding in agriculture and natural resources. Students will apply communication principles to two different cases.

Feature Story Preparation: To prepare to write your feature story, you will complete a mind map to brainstorm feature story ideas, outline your story, identify potential sources, and complete an audience analysis.

Peer Personality Profile and Interview: In order to practice interview, using quotes, and writing a feature story, students will interview a classmate a write a personality profile on them.

Feature Story Draft: Students will submit a draft of their feature story for feedback. The draft should be as complete as possible.

Active Voice Activity: Using your feature story draft, identify three sentences written in passive voice and re-write the sentences with the active voice.

Midterm Exam: The midterm will cover content from weeks one to five.

Feature Story Peer Review: Using the draft you submit, you will work with a peer to improve your writing.

Infographic: You will create an infographic that visually communicates the frame of your technical feature story to the target audience.

Blog & Social Media Post: Blogs are becoming an important part of media efforts. You will write a blog post that is at least 500 words and include at least two images. You will also provide suggested posts for Facebook and Twitter to promote your blog post.

Writing Consultations / Peer Reviews: For your final feature story, it is up to you to select someone to edit your work; the more critical the better. A checklist will be provided to aid in the process. Use these edits to make your feature story as strong as possible.

Agriculture or Natural Resources Feature Story: The majority of this term will be spent developing a feature story (approx. 2,000 words) that will explore a controversial or misunderstood aspect of agriculture and/or natural resources. The development of this final paper will include the stages outlined above.

COURSE CONTENT & SCHEDULE

Note: Some assignments will be started and potentially completed during class meetings. However, you may take extra time to complete the activities depending on the nature of class that day in terms of discussion and other learning activities your instructor has planned and the amount of time needed by individual students.

<i>Week 0 – Course and Content Overview</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Sept. 23	Course introduction	Due by Sunday, Sept. 26: 1) Introduction Project 2) Free Write #1
<i>Week 1 – Communicating Agriculture to the Public: What and Why?</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Sept. 28	AAAE Western Region Conference - NO CLASS	Due Sunday, Oct. 3: 1) Ag in the Media Critique #1 2) Free Write #2
Sept. 30	Defining “communicating agriculture to the public” Common issues and controversies in agricultural & natural resources	
<i>Week 2 – Communicating about Controversial Issues</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Oct. 5	Antibiotic resistance case study part 1 – sources of controversy	Due Sunday, Oct. 10: 1) Ag in the Media Critique #2 2) Case study application
Oct. 7	Antibiotic resistance case study part 2 – communication theories	
<i>Week 3 – Preparing to Write</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Oct. 12	Audience analysis Researching and generating writing ideas Developing story outlines	Due by Sunday, Oct. 17: 1) Mind map - feature story ideas 2) Feature story sources and outline 3) Audience analysis
Oct. 14	Source and fact checking Data interpretation and analysis	

<i>Week 4 – Organizing Information and Drafting your Feature Story</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Oct. 19	Elements of compelling writing Organizing and formatting your writing Distilling a message	Due by Sunday, Oct. 24: 1) Ag in the Media Critique #3 2) Peer interview activity 3) Peer personality profile
Oct. 21	Interviewing sources Using and formatting quotes	
<i>Week 5 – Editing and Active Voice</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Oct. 26	Active voice Proofreading	Due by Sunday, Oct. 31: 1) Technical feature draft 2) Active voice activity
Oct. 28	Editing marks and editing 101 GSP and AP Style	
<i>Week 6 – Literacy Overview and Midterm Exam</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Nov. 2	Media, science, and agriculture literacy Midterm review	Due by Sunday, Nov. 7: 1) Feature story peer review
Nov. 4	Midterm exam	
<i>Week 7 – Communicating with Visual Aids</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Nov. 9	Using visuals to support your story Infographics	Due by Sunday, Nov. 14: 1) Infographic 2) Ag in the Media Critique #4
Nov. 11	<i>Veteran's Day – NO CLASS</i>	
<i>Week 8 – Communicating to Change Behavior</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Nov. 16	Water conservation case study part 1 – establishing the need	Due by Sunday, Nov. 21: 1) Case study application
Nov. 18	Water conservation case study part 2 – identifying barriers and crafting messages	

<i>Week 9 – Social Media and Blogging</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Nov. 23	Writing for blogs Writing for social media	Due by Sunday, Nov. 28 1) Blog post 2) Social media posts
Nov. 25	<i>Thanksgiving Break – NO CLASS</i>	
<i>Week 10 – Writing Consultations and Peer Reviews</i>		
Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Nov. 29	Writing consultations / peer reviews	Due by Sunday, Dec. 5 1) Final feature story
Dec. 2	Writing consultations / peer reviews	
<i>Finals Week – Dec. 6-10</i>		
There is no final exam in AG 351. Have a great winter break!		