**The University of the West Indies, Faculty of Humanities and Education**

**Department of Literary, Cultural, and Communication Studies**

**Communication Studies Programme**

**Course**: **COMS 2102 - Written Communication**

**Course Description**: This course focuses on the written aspects of communication, as distinct from oral communication. Course participants will explore a range of written language principles and conventions and their application to a variety of public and personal communication situations. These situations involve written communication for print media and advertising, as well as business and creative purposes.

**Course Objectives:**

On the completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand and observe basic rules of Netiquette for online communication
2. Write copy for various media purposes
3. Analyse and evaluate written presentations
4. Conceptualise and create professional portfolios
5. Compose professional business letters and resumes

**Lecturer:**  Dr. Michael S. Jeffress

**Contact information:**

**Email:** [**michael.jeffress@sta.uwi.edu**](mailto:michael.jeffress@sta.uwi.edu)

**Phone: 662-2002, ext. 83030**

**Office location: FHE #325**

**Office hours: Wednesday, 1pm-3pm**

I prefer that you contact me by e-mail using your student e-mail account. If you e-mail me, please include the following information in any message. Failure to follow this protocol will result in your e-mail being deleted without reply: (1) a proper greeting, e.g., “Hello Dr. Jeffress,” (2) your name, e.g.,“This is Pat Clark” (3) which course you are in, e.g., “from your Coms 2102 course.” (4) a brief explanation of your request, (5) your phone number and best time to reach you (if you want to talk on the phone), (6) correct grammar and spelling in complete sentences, and (7) a proper salutation, e.g., “Kind regards, Pat.” Before you contact me with a question, please make sure that you have first referenced the course outline and checked with a classmate for an answer. You are also welcome to call me at my office or request an appointment to meet with me outside of office hours within normal business hours. I will generally respond to any e-mails or voicemails by the following business day.

**Please note:** I genuinely want you to enjoy this course and be successful. I am here to help, so please do not hesitate to contact me. I will do my best to make the course engaging and practical. You can expect that I will treat you professionally and with respect. I ask for the same. I expect all students to give their best and treat me, their tutors and classmates with respect. We will come from different backgrounds. We will have different cultural backgrounds. We will have different religious and political philosophies. We will not agree on all points, but we will listen respectfully and everyone should feel free to express his/her beliefs and opinions and no one should feel personally attacked if there is disagreement. We are here to engage in critical thinking about issues that affect us all. We will discuss and debate ideas and issues, but our aim should always be to engage in civil discourse in order to promote critical thinking, create understanding, encourage tolerance and champion social justice and equality for all.

**Lecture and Workshops:** Lecture takes place on Tuesday 1-2 pm in the CLL Auditorium; Tutorial workshops take place on Tuesday 2-4pm – in various tutorial rooms in the CLL building and one tutorial on Wednesday

**Course Assignments & Value:** This course carries a value of three credits. Coursework is worth 50% of your overall grade, and the final examination is worth 50%. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course, and you must pass **BOTH** the course work and final examination in order to pass the course.

**Final Grade Components**:

* Graded worksheets, quizzes, and misc. assignments: 5%
* Assignment One (Feature article for magazine/newspaper): 5%
* Assignment Two (Feature article for magazine/newspaper): 5%
* Assignment Three (Cover letter, resume, and video resume): 5%
* Assignment Four (Final Portfolio Assignment): 10%
* Participation in lecture and tutorials (Present and actively engaged, respectfully listening, raising thoughtful questions and offering insightful comments): 20%\*
* Final Exam – Over lectures and assigned readings: 50%

\*Participation grade will be factored by attendance 25% (each tardy or early departure = -2%; each excused absence = -5%, each unexcused absence = -10%), peer/group member evaluations of participation level (25%) and evaluations by the lecturer and tutor (50%).

**Course/Campus Grading System**: There are four main letter grades assigned based on the percentage points earned for each assignment:

**G.P.A. System**

A+ (90-100) A (80-89), A- (75-79) B+(70-74), B (65-69), B- (60-64) C+ (55-59), C (50-54) F1(45-49) F2 (40-44) F3 (0-39).

**Required Course Text:** Sumner, D. E, and Miller, H. G. (2013). *Feature and Magazine Writing: Action, Angle and Anecdotes*, 3rd Ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 978-1-118-30513-3. (This book is on reserve at the library and also available as an e-Book).

Additional Readings as assigned.

**Class Policies:** Students are to be guided by the following:

* **Attending Lecture and Tutorial is Extremely Important:** Developing the discipline of attending lectures and tutorials and being on time and exercising due diligence to stay on top of the readings and assignments and study for the exams help build character and important life skills. I expect you to attend all lectures and tutorials. If you are absent, then you should have a justifiable excuse, e.g., an illness or family emergency. Late work will not be accepted for credit without prior approval and will only be approved for unavoidable circumstances out of the student’s control and for which student has proper documentation. If you miss lecture, you should contact your instructor; if you miss a tutorial, then you should contact your tutor. Participation is part of your overall grade, but the fact of the matter is that if you are not in regular attendance, then you will not be able to pass the course. It is the same as if you had a job but did not show up to work: you would not get a pay check and would probably lose the job in short order. Students who miss more than three tutorials will receive a failing grade for the course. Finally, everyone has the same opportunities to earn the same points throughout the semester. No extra credit will be awarded.
* **Electronic devices policy.** Research actually supports the fact that taking handwritten notes results in better student outcomes. For this reason and to minimize distractions during lecture, no electronic devices are permitted. This means no laptops, notebooks, smart watches or glasses, and positively no cell phone use. These devices may be utilized during tutorials at the discretion of the tutors for the purpose of doing research or completing assignments, but they should be kept in your book bag or otherwise out of sight during lecture. If you have a special need to use assistive technology or you may need to keep your phone on vibrate mode in case of an emergency, then please see the instructor before class for permission. Students who violate this policy may be asked to leave and be marked with an unexcused absence for the day.
* **All assignments must be completed.** Completing all assignments is not a guarantee that you will pass the course, but you definitely will not pass the course if you do not complete all of them. No assignment is optional; all must be completed.
* In this course, students are expected to **read, write, listen and participate** in the exchange of ideas with their instructor, tutor and peers.
* Preparation for a lecture requires **further reading, writing and discussion**.
* Preparation for workshops requires a review of concepts, drafting/rehearsing/previewing an oral/written/graphic presentation and actual sharing of presentations.
* All members of each group must participate fully in any group work conducted. Peer assessment will be enforced.
* All work should be original to the student. All sources used must be properly cited. Turnitin will be utilized to screen writing samples for plagiarism. Any plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment for the first occurrence. A second occurrence will result in being dismissed with a final grade of “F” for the course and be reported to the relevant academic authorities.

**Mode of Delivery**

Three (3) hours contact time per week.

**Course Schedule: This schedule is subject to change**. **Assignment Due Dates for your 4 course work assignments will be given out in class. Class attendance is extremely important. If you miss the lecture, do not expect that I will repeat it to you in my office.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Class Period** | **Lecture Topic** | **Weekly Readings/** |
| **Week 1**  Jan 17th | Introduction to course | Course Review |
| **Week 2**  Jan 24th | Basic Principles – Effective Writing | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 3**  Jan 31st | Proper Netiquette 1: Email and Cell Phone | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 4**  Feb 7th | Proper Netiquette 2: Social Media | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 5**  Feb 14th | Basic Principles of Feature Writing 1 | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 6**  Feb 21st | Basic Principles of Feature Writing 2 | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 7**  Feb 28th | No Class. Carnival Tuesday. Assignments may still be due, however. | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week 8**  Mar 7th | Digital Storytelling/Blogging | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 9**  Mar 14th | Speech/Expository Writing | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 10**  Mar 21st | Guest Lecturer from the media industry | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 11**  Mar 28th | Basic Business Communication Part 1 | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 12**  April 4th | Basic Business Communication Part 2 | Readings will be issued and assigned in class |
| **Week 13**  April 11th | Course Review and Exam Preparation |  |

**Very Important:** **Assignment Due Dates for all course assignments will be given out in class.**