

ASTE 1710: Introduction to Agricultural Communication

Course Description

This course provides students with an introduction to the field of agricultural communications and journalism by providing an overview of the history, importance to society, and role media plays in agriculture. This course will introduce the communication process, how media serves as a communication channel, and how agricultural communicators utilize media to reach a variety of audiences. Students will specifically investigate historical and contemporary media including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, movies, public relations, Internet, and social media.

COMMUNICATE. ADVOCATE. EDUCATE.



Course Learning Objectives and Assessment Tools

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

GAIN FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE (TERMINOLOGY, TRENDS)

To do this, students will complete quizzes and in-class activities that assess their knowledge of important historical dates and uses for different media to communicate agricultural and environmental topics.

DEVELOP SPECIFIC SKILLS, COMPETENCIES, AND POINTS OF VIEW NEEDED BY PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD MOST CLOSELY RELATED TO THIS COURSE.

To do this, students will conduct an audience analysis, interview sources, create a podcast, blog, take digital photographs, complete a media relations simulation, develop a crisis communication plan, and learn about business etiquette, agricultural literacy, and emotional intelligence.

OFFICE HOURS

If my door is open, you are welcome to come in. Even if it's closed, knock. If I'm available, you can see me. If you need to see me at a specific time, please call or e-mail to make an appointment. Note—I do not read nor reply to e-mail on weekends or weekdays between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. If you are having trouble understanding a concept from this course, please visit with me quickly so that I can help you understand.

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Kelsey Hall
Office: 107 ASTE
Phone: 797-3289
E-mail: kelsey.hall@usu.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Class is held in ASTE 108 on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays from 9:30 a.m.-10:20 a.m.

COURSE FEES

No course fees are associated with this course.

TEXTBOOK

No text is required for this course (but don't get too excited, see the readings & videos section).

READINGS & VIDEOS

Readings and videos are selected from online resources and agricultural publications. Most readings and the videos are available through links in Canvas. Readings not available through Canvas will be provided in class.

SUGGESTED SUPPLIES BUT NOT REQUIRED

I ask that you come prepared with an open mind to discuss the topic for lecture. You will periodically receive readings and handouts, and for that reason I recommend getting a three-ring binder or pocket folder. You may also want a USB or other media storage device for preparing your course assignments.

COURSE TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Canvas is used to post lecture content, grades, reminders, reading assignments, and assignment rubrics. Here's how you log in:

1. Go to <http://usu.instructure.com>
2. Enter your A-Number
3. Enter your password (the same one you use for Banner or Aggiemail)
4. Click "Login"
5. Under courses on the navigation bar, click on Fa15 ASTE-1710-001
6. Click on the navigation bar on the left side of the site to find what you need
 - Announcements – Messages relevant to the course
 - Syllabus – Electronic and PDF version of syllabus and schedule
 - Modules – Each topic can have an overview, readings & videos, lecture materials & more resources posted
 - Assignments – Assignment descriptions, grading rubrics, & deadlines posted
 - Grades – Assignment grades

For Canvas, Passwords or any other computer-related technical support, contact the IT Service Desk:

435-797-4357 (797-HELP)

877-878-8325

<http://it.usu.edu>

servicedesk@usu.edu

GRADING POLICY

The instructor grades each assignment using a rubric that will be given to the students after the course material for the assignment was explained in lecture. The rubric and comments/edits on your document are returned for each assignment. Your grade will be calculated using the university's standard scale.

Grade	Percentage Range
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+	67-69%
D	60-66%
F	59% or below

Course Policies

ATTENDANCE

Attending each class meeting is a crucial element for success in the course. We will have group discussions about agricultural communications and journalism, and your views and opinions are welcome and encouraged as long as you remain respectful of your classmates. If you must miss class, you are expected to contact the instructor prior to class.

LATE WORK

As a professional in the agricultural communications field, you will work with many deadlines. It is imperative that you start learning now how to organize yourself to meet such deadlines. Because this is so important, a **20 percent per day deduction** will be assessed for all assignments turned in late. Assignments will **not be accepted if they are more than 2 days late.**

WITHDRAWAL POLICY AND "I" GRADE POLICY

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes:

1. Incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks,
2. A death in the immediate family,
3. Financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment,
4. Change in work schedule as required by an employer,
5. Other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor. (<http://www.usu.edu/policies/pdf/Incomplete-Grade.pdf>)

INSTRUCTOR COMMUNICATION

All communication will be disseminated from Canvas or during class time. I will use Announcements in Canvas to communicate high priority and timely information. **You must set your notification preferences in Canvas to receive Announcements and Conversation Messages to ASAP by email, cell phone for text messages, or other social networking services of your choice.** Check out these guides on Canvas to help you.

1. How to set up notification preferences in Canvas
2. How to use the Inbox for Conversations in Canvas

I will use the Assignments tool in Canvas to communicate deadlines on assignments and rubrics. I will provide timely assignment feedback through comments on your documents and rubrics.

Assignments

PARTICIPATION (80 POINTS)

All students are expected to attend class and be on time. If you must miss class, you are expected to contact the instructor prior to class. While attendance will not be formally taken, it will be noted. There will be occasional participation points given out through in-class activities. Students present during the lecture will receive credit. Absent students will not be given credit for these assignments. Students with a university excused absence will be allowed to make up these assignments.

BIOGRAPHY SHEET (10 POINTS)

Your instructor will pass out a biography sheet for you to complete and re-submit. You are expected to answer the questions using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

ACADEMIC ADVISING ACTIVITY (10 POINTS)

You will make an appointment with your academic advisor or faculty advisor to discuss something you want to know more about, such as 4-year degree plan, study abroad, internship opportunities, scholarships, research opportunities, student services, etc. You need to ask questions during the appointment. Your instructor will give a form to complete.

BLOGGING (100 POINTS)

The purpose of this assignment is to monitor mainstream and agricultural news sources (television, newspapers, websites, magazines, commodity publications, etc.) and blog about current issues that have an impact on or connection to agriculture and or the natural resources in Utah. Over the semester, you must blog for a total of 8 entries. You are welcome to blog more than that, but 8 are the minimum number required. You are also required to comment on at least 4 of your classmates' entries. You are graded on the quality of your writing, so please be professional in your comments and use good grammar in all entries. Please ask your instructor for assistance in editing your blog posts if you are unsure about grammar and punctuation. Each blog post and comment is worth 5 points. Your instructor will explain this further in class.

Course Policies

STUDENT FEEDBACK/COMMUNICATION

I welcome all feedback on the course. My preferred method of communication with individual students is in person. I will respond to email within 48 hours (Monday – Friday). If you experience a legitimate emergency (according to my standards) that will prevent you from completing required coursework on time, I expect you to communicate with me at the earliest reasonable opportunity. Canvas will track communication between students and teachers providing date and time stamps. Please state the nature of the emergency, and when you expect to turn in the coursework. Over the weekend, expect a slower response time.

Your messages must be PROFESSIONALLY composed. That means:

- Capitalizing sentences.
- Using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation to the best of your ability.
- Not using “text short hand.”
- Closing the message with your first and last name.
- Proofreading the e-mail before you click “send.”

COURSE ETIQUETTE

Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on the part of the student and the instructor. Neither instructor nor student should be subject to others’ behavior that is rude, disruptive, intimidating, or demeaning. The instructor has primary responsibility for and control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity.

Instructor Responsibilities:

- Treat all students with courtesy and respect.
- Be open to constructive input from students in the course.
- Ensure that opportunities to participate are shared equally by all students in the class.

Student Responsibilities:

- Complete reading assignments before lectures.
- Be prepared for class activities.
- When speaking or writing use courteous, respectful language and keep comments and questions relevant to the topic.

SYLLABUS CHANGES

This syllabus is subject to change. I will notify the class regarding all changes. In the event of any discrepancy between this syllabus and content found in Canvas, the information in **CANVAS WILL TAKE PRECEDENCE**.

Assignments

SPEAKER REFLECTION PAPER (20 POINTS EACH)

You will provide typed reflections on the presentations of guest speakers. Each reflection is worth 10 points and is due the next class period. Your attention to language as well as proper punctuation, spelling and grammar reflects well on you personally and professionally. The paper should be a one-to-two-page summary:

1. Who was the guest speaker?
2. What were the speaker’s main points? You can use bullet points to be concise and save time.
3. What did you learn? This is your critical reflection to analyze what the speaker said in light of the topics discussed in class and assignments. If there are points you do not agree with or weaknesses in the presentation, you can mention these but state why. Avoid criticisms such as the presentation was too long, boring, as these types of comments are unproductive and may detract from your work. Show how you intend to use or apply the information learned.
4. What are a few questions you would like to follow-up on and learn more about?

QUIZZES (25 POINTS EACH/75 POINTS TOTAL)

You will take three quizzes that are based on material covered up to the quiz. You should study the learning objectives, reading assignments, and lecture content to prepare for the quizzes. The quizzes can include multiple choice, true and false, matching, short answer, or application questions.

PHOTO CRITIQUE (10 POINTS)

Apply what you have learned about agricultural photography by taking photos of plants, crops, animals, or landscapes. Send an e-mail message to kelsey.hall@usu.edu with your photo and caption attached by 5 p.m. on October 19. We will critique these photos in class on October 21.

AGCHAT PROJECT

Follow, even participate in, one AgChat, an online conversation via Twitter on Tuesdays from 6-8 p.m. Mountain Time (<http://twitter.com/agchat>). You will provide a 100-word reflection of your experience.

Course Policies

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to be respectful of fellow classmates and the instructor. In order to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to learning, students are discouraged from using cellular phones, text messaging, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior will result in, minimally, a request to leave class.

GRADE DISPUTE

At some point in this course, you may disagree with a grade you receive on an assignment. Here are some guidelines to follow in the case of a grade dispute:

- You are encouraged to take sufficient time, a minimum of 24 hours before responding, to think about your grade, review your assignment and respond to me in Canvas inbox. I will only review your grade if you provide me with a written response explaining your perspective and rationale concerning your grade.
- You may send this response to me via Canvas inbox. Your argument should be well reasoned and based on evidence. It does not have to be long, but there should be a good rationale for why the grade should be changed.

An example of a grade dispute will look something like this:

On Question 26, I marked B as the correct answer. According to my notes, this is correct; however, it is marked wrong. My notes (the book, etc...) indicate B is correct because.... Please re-grade this question.

Your written argument must be submitted within **seven (7) days of the time the work was returned to you or the grade was posted or received**. After seven days, no assignment grades will be considered for change. Schedule a meeting with me to further discuss your grade and bring your graded assignment with you to the meeting.

Assignments

Agriculture in Movies Discussion (75 points)

To present a critical analysis of films, you must study the film carefully. I suggest that you first view the films in their entirety. You will have a few questions to address during the class discussion. With those questions in mind, you should view the films at least once more in their entirety and take notes. It's likely you will view segments of major importance two or three times in order to answer the questions for this. You will receive a grading sheet after the discussion is finished.

MEDIA ANALYSIS (100 points)

Agriculture topics are covered by many sources including agriculture and non-agriculture media. As agricultural communicators, you must be current on what issues are being covered and how they are covered in the media. You must find three media sources covering the same agricultural issue. The information must be published since 2013. Two sources must be from the popular press (radio, TV, newspaper, magazine, e-zine), while only one source must be from the agriculture press. You must evaluate the coverage of the issue in all three sources in a 4-page report. Your report can be longer than 4 pages if needed. Your analysis should look at the number and types of sources utilized in the pieces, the balance (or lack of) in the story, the tone of the story, the use of photos (and what types) with the story, and lastly how you might change the coverage of this issue to cover it fairly if you were the reporter. A narrative shorter than the required length will receive an automatic 10-point deduction per missing page. Your instructor will provide you more specific guidelines.

PODCAST (25 POINTS)

You will develop a podcast on a topic that relates to your blog posts. We will discuss farm broadcasting and script writing in class to prepare you for this assignment. You will interview sources and submit a script of your podcast that your instructor will edit before you record your podcast. You will use Audacity and an external microphone to record your podcast. The Audacity file will be exported as a MP3 file. Then, you will use your instructor's Podomatic program to create a Podcast. You will embed your podcast into your blog. It must be between 1:00 – 1:30 minutes in length. The script is due on November 13. You will set up a time with your instructor to ensure the recording and posting are done correctly. The podcast posting is due by December 11.

Business Etiquette Lesson (25 points)

You will teach a lesson on business etiquette in lieu of a final exam. Topics may include but are not limited to introducing yourself, workplace manners, e-mail etiquette, business attire, time management texting etiquette, cell phone use at work, Facebook use at work, networking with business cards, and designing business cards. Details to come in class.

University Policies

HONOR PLEDGE

As stated in The Student Code, "Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to reinforce the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students."

Upon admission to the university, you agreed to abide by this Honor Code by signing the Honor Pledge, which reads: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity." Complete academic honesty is expected in this course. Cheating on exams or plagiarism on written assignments will result in a failing grade and may result in further action according to University policy.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The Instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to the following:

- **Cheating:** using or attempting to use or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity, including working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually";
- Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
- Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;

DO
YOUR OWN
WORK AND GIVE
CREDIT TO THOSE
FROM WHOM YOU
PARAPHRASE OR
QUOTE THEIR
IDEAS.

- Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
- Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
- Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.

Falsification: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.

Plagiarism: representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code (Article VII. University Regulations Regarding Discrimination and Harassment).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments **may be eligible for reasonable** accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Please contact the DRC prior to or as early in the semester as possible. Alternate formats for course content are available with advanced notice.

Contacting the Disability Resource Center (DRC):

- Location in Room 101 of the University Inn
- 435-797-2444 (voice)
- <http://www.usu.edu/drc/>

Disability Related Resources for Current Students:

- Disability Resource Center Student Handbook
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student Handbook
- Disability Related Scholarships
- Campus Resources
- Documentation Guidelines
- Online Resources for Students with Disabilities