COMM 413-201   **Writing for Strategic Communications** (writing intensive course)

Fall 2022
Mondays 7:00 – 9:30 p.m.
Class meets at School of COMM – Room 013

Professor:	Scott Phillips
Office:	Lewis Tower, 9th Floor (LT-900C)
E-mail:	sphillips10@luc.edu
Office Hours:	By appointment

Texts: *Writing Without Bullshit*, by Josh Bernoff

Associated Press Stylebook 2020 or 2022 (available as a book, app or online)

Trust in Technology Report – Edelman

Course Description:
Being a strong and versatile writer provides an essential edge in a career in communication. This advanced, writing-intensive course engages students in the strategic process of professional-level writing by focusing on communication objectives, techniques, style and mechanics. Students will learn the importance of planning, research, pre-writing, editing and rewriting in the writing process. The course provides practical, real-world writing experience in diverse formats for a range of audiences.

Objectives
● Learn to write more effectively.
● Strengthen critical and creative thinking abilities.
● Gain familiarity with effective writing for public relations, journalism, advertising, and digital communication.
● Sharpen punctuation, grammar and Associated Press Style rules and usage.
● Feel more prepared for writing tests required by employers in communication fields.
● Create a professional writing portfolio

You will complete a wide range of writing assignments, including timed in-class assignments and out-of-class assignments.

At the end of the semester, you'll present your best work in a printed or digital portfolio. Please keep all assignments until after the class ends.

AP Style
For many years, public relations and related industries have been intimately connected to the newspaper industry. Because newspapers use Associated Press (AP) Style, this has been the standard format for print-based public relations writing. Today, newspapers are less important as audiences have moved online. But AP style is still important as a foundation for written communication. First, you *will* be pitching to journalists in your career. Second, AP style brings discipline and consistency to your writing. Knowing AP style is a marker of your status as a professional. Finally, when you seek employment, you'll take a writing test as part of the application process. That test will likely include knowledge of AP style.

Writing Without B.S.
Josh Bernoff has written a comprehensive guide to changing how you write. In this practical and witty book, you'll learn to front-load your writing with pithy titles, subject lines, and opening sentences. You'll acquire the courage and skill to purge weak and meaningless jargon, wimpy passive voice, and cowardly weasel words. And you'll get used to writing directly to the reader to make every word count. At the center of it all is the Iron Imperative: Treat the reader's time as more valuable than your own. Learn to embrace this approach to business writing, and your clients, your boss, and your colleagues will be more likely recognize and appreciate your thinking.

Follow Josh's blog here: www. http://withoutbullshit.com/blog

Trust in Technology Report
In its 22nd year, the Edelman Trust Barometer is an annual global survey of more than 36,000 respondents in 28 countries. The report is published in January and covers a range of timely and important societal indicators of trust among business, media, government, and NGOs, shaping conversation and setting the agenda for the year ahead.

Download the report here: https://www.edelman.com/research/trend-eroding-trust-tech-continues

Keeping in Touch
Get the most out of your instructor! I am available to help you:

- During my office hours
- By email
- By appointment
- Before or after class

Additionally, I will post digital copies of course work, links to resources and other materials on SAKAI.

Accommodations

Any student with a learning disability who needs accommodation during class sessions or exams should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities to the instructor during the first week of class; this information will be treated in complete confidence. The instructor will accommodate students' needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the responsibility of each student to plan in advance to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. Details are available at www.luc.edu/sswd.

Students are excused for recognized religious holidays. Please let me know in advance if you have a conflict.

Grading

Students will be expected to know material covered in lectures and the textbook, and this will be measured through outside writing assignments and exercises.

Four quizzes	10%
Weekly assignments	70%
Final portfolio	10%
Participation/attendance/in-class writing	10%

Grading Criteria for Written Work

A: Publishable work with no spelling, grammatical, punctuation or AP Style errors and the proper information and sources written in a lively, well-organized manner.

B: Minimal spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Minimal missing information and sources; minimal problems with the lead and organization.

C: Notable number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Noticeable missing information and sources; problems with the lead and organization.

D: Significant number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Significant missing information and sources; Significant problems with the lead and organization.

F: Misspelling of proper names. Other major spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Almost total lack of information and sources; Severe problems with the lead and organization.

Grading Points

Score	Grade
100-94:	A
93-90:	A-
89-88:	B+
87-83:	B
82-80:	B-
79-78:	C+
77-73:	C
72-70:	C-
69-68:	D+
67-64:	D
62-60:	D-
59-0:	F

Deadlines

Deadlines are important in the professional world, and you will be required to file assignments on time. Late assignments will drop one letter grade each day they are filed past deadline. The instructor does not accept assignments by e-mail without prior approval.

Style and Spelling

It is important that you learn proper newspaper style, so refer often to your Associated Press Stylebook. Spelling and grammar are equally important. Your grade will suffer if your copy contains style and spelling errors.

Professionalism

This class is run like a place of business; treat it as if it were your job. You will be expected to display a respectable level of professionalism by attending class regularly, arriving prepared for class, paying attention during lectures and participating in discussions. Frequent absences will result in a lower grade. Showing up on time also is crucial, since much material will be covered in lectures and writing labs. It is important to be on time. Tardiness will be taken into consideration when computing your final grade. If you're expecting to be absent or late, please email me before class, the same practice as if you were holding a job. Lastly, to help create a positive learning community, put your cell phones and mobile devices away and cease social networking activities.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Loyola University Chicago, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle.

Failing to meet the following academic integrity standards is a serious violation of personal honesty and the academic ideals that bind the University into a learning community. These standards apply to both individual and group assignments. Individuals working in a group may be held responsible if one of the group members has violated one or more of these standards:

- Students may not plagiarize.
- Students may not submit the same work for credit for more than one assignment (known as self-plagiarism).
- Students may not fabricate data.
- Students may not collude.
- Students may not cheat.
- Student may not facilitate academic misconduct.

Follow this link for more details about these standards, sanctions, and academic misconduct procedures:
(https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

Class Conduct: One important aspect of a Jesuit education is learning to respect the rights and opinions of others. Please respect others by (1) allowing all classmates the right to voice their opinions without fear of ridicule, and (2) not using profanity or making objectionable (including gendered, racial or ethnic) comments, especially comments directed at a classmate.

Sakai: All course materials will be located on Sakai which can be accessed at https://sakai.luc.edu Sakai is a web based learning management system. You will be able to access it from any computer connected to the internet. Instructional guides and video tutorials for using Sakai are available at: http://www.luc.edu/itrs/sakai/sakai-student-tutorials.shtml

Course content, including syllabi, PowerPoints, lectures, etc. will be available online. You should check Sakai often for announcements, assignments, and other course content.

Student Support Resources:

- ITS Service Desk: helpdesk@luc.edu 773-508-4487

- Library Subject Specialists: http://libraries.luc.edu/specialists

- Student Accessibility Center: sac@luc.edu

- Writing Center: http://www.luc.edu/writing/

- Ethics Hotline: http://luc.edu/sglc/aboutus/ 855.603.6988

Email Messages: All email messages sent to students about this course will be sent to their Loyola email address. Students are expected to check their Loyola email address on a regular basis. You can access your web-based LUC email account at https://outlook.luc.edu.

Special Circumstances--**Receiving Assistance**: Students are urged to contact their instructors should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have any special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work, please let your instructors know so they can establish a plan for assignment completion. If you require assignment accommodations, please contact your instructors early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with Student Accessibility Center (SAC) (http://www.luc.edu/sac/).

Copyright: Copyright law was designed to give rights to the creators of written work, artistic work, computer programs and other creative materials. The Copyright Act requires that people who use or reference the work of others must follow a set of guidelines designed to protect authors' rights. Unfortunately, copyright law is complex and too often incomprehensible; that does not, however, excuse users from following the rules. The safest practice is to remember (1) to refrain from distributing works used in class (whether distributed by the professor or used for research); they are likely copyright protected and (2) that any research or creative work should be cited according to *[add the standards of your discipline, as MLA guidelines].*
For LUC's copyright resources check online: http://www.luc.edu/copyright

Intellectual Property: All lectures, notes, PowerPoints and other instructional materials in this course are the intellectual property of the professor. As a result, they may not be distributed or shared in any manner, either on paper or virtually without my written permission. Lectures may not be recorded without my written consent; when consent is given, those recordings may be used for review only and may not be distributed. Recognizing that your work, too, is your intellectual property, I will not share or distribute your work in any form without your written permission.

Recorded Synchronous Sessions: An online or blended course may use a software to record live, online class discussions. As a student in any class that holds synchronous sessions, your participation in live class discussions will likely be recorded. These recordings will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. All recordings will become unavailable to students in the class when the Sakai course is unpublished (i.e. shortly after the course ends, per the Sakai administrative schedule: https://www.luc.edu/its/itrs/sakai/administrativeschedule/). Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Please discuss this option with your instructor.

The use of all video recordings will be in keeping with the University Privacy Statement shown below:

Privacy Statement
Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the

classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Students will be informed of such recordings by a statement in the syllabus for the course in which they will be recorded. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so <u>only</u> with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. Recordings including student activity that have been initiated by the instructor may be retained by the instructor only for individual use.

Tentative Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1, August 29
Monday
Introduction and syllabus overview.
Read: WWB Part 1-2
Read: AP A-F
Read: Edelman Trust in Technology
Assignment: ID 3 examples of bad About Pages from NRF 2023 Exhibitor Directory (www.nrfbigshow.nrf.com/exhibitors) and write one paragraph on how each fails as strategic communications.
Assignment: Choose one of the exhibitor descriptions you critiqued, research that company, and write a description that better communicates that company and its offerings – (Due 9/5)

Week 2, September 5
Labor Day Holiday – No Class
Read: WWB 3-4
Read: Edelman Trust in Technology
Read: AP G-L

Week 3, September 12
Monday
Client objectives, audiences ,and how strategic writing moves companies closer to their goals; why we are hired! Tips for writing shorter
Review AP A-F
Review AP G-L
Read: Harvard Business Review article by Josh Bernoff https://hbr.org/2016/09/bad-writing-is-destroying-your-companys-productivity
Read: AP M-R
Read: Edelman Trust in Technology
Assignment: Front load a subject and tight executive summary of the Edelman Trust in Technology report – (Due 9/19)

Week 4, September 19
Monday
WWB Change What You Write.
Message development
Review AP M-R
Read: AP S-Z
Assignment: Edit Cision news release to reduce word count, remove passive voice and weasel words ([https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/capitol-acquisition-corp-iii-to-combine-with-cision-300425948.html?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTVdFeE5qWTVaalZoTUdRMSIsInQiOiJHeWYxRitWd1oyWk1aUHFjTlNSeHdyUm9yc3V4RGtVZkdua0w4ZTB4M3VrVmZ5WU1KTzd0MDZlY0NKT2NLNFwvTGFkWllrekZVVm9YMVJDTW1lYnVnbkZzTUVcL3hpcTBmWU5yWDhiZHN0cUdCV0FRRllVVGg1UjNDTnRTb1BwTjNtIn0%3D](https://www.prnewswire.com/)) (also on SAKAI).
Assignment: Extract Edelman's own message objectives for the Trust in Technology Report – what the report tells the reader about Edelman – (Due 9/26)
Quiz #1: AP A-F (In class)

Week 5, September 26
Monday
Introduction to news release purpose, components, format, procedures for gathering information and drafting.
The appeal of statistics- and study-based news releases, their purpose and format.
Assignment: Write a stats-based announcement news release on the Trust in Technology report and its findings – (Due 10/3)
Assignment: Three questions for Josh Bernoff – (Due 10/3)
Quiz #2: AP G-L (In class)

Week 6, October 3
Monday
In-class Q&A with WWB author Josh Bernoff.
Assignment: Write a news release on Josh Bernoff's in-class discussion, including his approach to effective, strategic writing – (Due 10/10)
Quiz #3: AP M-R (In class)

Week 7, October 10
Monday
Mid-Semester Break – No Class

Week 8, October 17
Monday
Introduction to case studies, their purpose, audience, target media, formula.
In-class presentation / interview with case study subject.
Assignment: Write case study based on in-class presentation – (Due 10/24)

Week 9, October 24
Monday
Introduction to features and bylines
Review AP S-Z
Assignment: Write a bylined article on the Trust in Technology report by Edelman's Sanjay Nair (https://www.edelman.com/people/sanjay-nair) (Due 10/31)
Quiz #3: AP M-R (In class)

Week 10, October 31
Monday
Introduction to strategic blogging
Review AP S-Z
Read: "Anatomy of an Effective Blog (document on Sakai)
Read: https://bloggingwizard.com/copywriting-tips-for-better-blogging/
Assignment: Rewrite your Trust in Technology bylined article as a blog post – (Due 11/7)

Week 11, November 7
Monday
Writing for the ear; audio and video
Read: "Sound Reporting" from NPR - the relevant section (starting on page 25) is available on Google Books:
https://books.google.com/books?id=wLrRHgAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false
Assignment: Write and record an introduction or "setup" for a podcast interview with Josh Bernoff on his viewpoints and approach to effective writing – (Due 11/14)

Week 12, November 14
Monday
Pitching media; in-class discussion with media relations specialist
Introduction to professional writing portfolios
Read: Muck Rack Guide to Pitching: https://info.muckrack.com/guide-to-pr-pitching-2020
Read: Ketner Group "Five Tips for Media Pitching in 2022:
https://ketnergroup.com/2022/02/22/landing-the-pitch-tips-for-media-pitching/
Read: Clippings.me portfolio examples: https://www.clippings.me/writing-portfolio-examples
Read: Pressfolios guide for writing portfolios: https://pressfolios.com/ (14-day free trial)
Assignment: Media pitch for feature coverage of Trust in Technology report - (Due 11/21)
Assignment: Assemble all writing assignments into your professional portfolio – either a document or digital. You will have the opportunity to submit a second, final portfolio - (Due 11/21)

Week 13, November 21
Monday
Introduction to speeches and speech writing
Watch: How to Write a Perfect Speech https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oV1h7n0HcTE
Read: Top Speechwriting Tips from Michelle Obama's speechwriter
Read: The Lowlights from Ben Sasse's Dreadful Commencement Speech
https://withoutbullshit.com/blog/the-lowlights-from-ben-sasses-dreadful-commencement-speech
Assignment: Write a 10-minute persuasive speech on steps companies should take to build employee trust in the company's use of technologies as outlined in the Edelman Trust in Technology report – (Due 11/28)
Quiz #4: AP S-Z (In class)

Week 14, November 28
Monday
Introduction to social media posts
Introduction to persuasive presentations
Read: "How to Master Social Media" section of Writing Without B.S.
Read: "Make Your Slides Sing" from Toastmasters
https://www.toastmasters.org/magazine/magazine-issues/2019/sep/make-your-slides-sing
Read: www.Canva.com for social media templates
Watch: The 75-minute "Presentation Zen" by Garr Reynolds on Talks at Google
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZ2vtQCESpk
Assignment: Write two social media posts based on Trust in Technology report findings – (Due 12/5)
Assignment: Create a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on consumer trust in driverless automobiles and how to improve it, as outlined in the Edelman Trust in Technology report – (Due 12/5)

Week 15, December 5
Monday
Final instructor/student Q&A on aspects of strategic writing, as well as a practical approach to evaluating salary offers in public relations and related consulting practices.
(Refreshments will be served)
Assignment: Update and submit final portfolio (Due 12/12)

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