ENGL 4320.201 (Spring 2020)
Professional Writing Workshop (F2F)
Writing for Social Media
MW 02:00-03:15PM

Dr. Christopher Andrews
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Office Hours: MW 11:00 am-12 noon & 1:00-2:00 pm; TR 11:00-12 noon

I maintain a consistent web presence and am available via email and in person. I will commonly respond to Blackboard or email requests within 24 hours, and you can expect a response within 3 days.

Catalog Description

ENGL 4320: Professional Writing Workshop is repeatable for credit as the course topic varies.

About the Course

This course explores social media from the perspective of technical and professional writing: both how companies, organizations, and professionals adapt social media to their own ends and how user-generated content has changed the meaning and activities of technical and professional writers more generally.

We will study knowledge work, ethics of networked identities and organizations, and how social media complicate traditional models of audience, delivery, and the rhetorical situation. We’ll learn about content strategy and research how organizations adopt social media to their purposes and contexts. Most importantly, we will practice strategies for developing focused, accessible, rhetorical, and afterlife-conscious web content.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply rhetorical skills relevant to digital composing and social media, including:
   ○ Planning, composing, and revising accessible, rhetorical content
   ○ Repurposing content for different delivery media
   ○ Working with governance and content strategy
2. Explain ethical, social, and technological issues relevant to professional and personal uses of social media
3. Evaluate distinctive social media practices in professions, organizations, or communities relevant to their academic interests or career field
**Required Materials**

- Please bring personal mobile devices to class for use in writing and research projects.
- Islander account (including email, network logon, Blackboard)

**Graded Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#amwriting</td>
<td>Each week on Wednesday</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pot of the week</td>
<td>Each week on Wednesday</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical analysis</td>
<td>February 19 (Week 5)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic social media project</td>
<td>April 8 (Week 11)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content strategy project</td>
<td>May 6 (Week 15)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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All projects should respect intellectual property and include medium-appropriate citation conventions. I accept revisions on major projects, provided that you meet formally with me to discuss feedback on your project, a revision agenda, and a timeline for completion. More details about this process are on Blackboard.
# Course Outline

Reading schedule is tentative and may be changed.  
Readings marked (BB) will be PDFs or web links provided via Blackboard.

| Weeks 1-2 | Gallagher, “Update Culture”  
| CDC Guide to Writing for Social Media (Bb)  
| Federal Social Media Accessibility Toolkit (Bb)  
| WebAIM Intro to accessibility (Bb)  
| Pew Internet: Teens and social media report 2018 (Bb)  
| Buck, “Examining Digital Literacy Practices on Social Network Sites” (Bb)  
| Federal Plain Language Guidelines, Section IV (Bb)  
| #amwriting (Wednesday each week)  
| POTW (Wednesday each week) |

## Let’s be obvious: what are social media and social networking sites?  
What does it mean to “write for” social media?

| Weeks 3-5 | Gallagher, “Update Culture”  
| Assorted texts on Rhetorical Situation, Rhetorical Ecologies (Bb)  
| Jenkins on Participatory Culture (Bb)  
| #amwriting (Wednesday each week)  
| POTW (Wednesday each week)  
| Rhetorical Analysis Infographic due February 19 (Week 5) |

## How do social media change how we should think about audience, purpose, and context?

| Weeks 6-9 | boyd, Networked publics (Bb)  
| boyd, “Did media literacy backfire?” (Bb)  
| Federal Plain Language guidelines, Section III (Bb)  
| MailChimp Style Guide (Bb)  
| BuzzFeed Style Guide (Bb)  
| #amwriting (Wednesday each week)  
| POTW (Wednesday each week) |

## What are networked publics, and how do they work?

| Weeks 10-11 | Academic research study about social media in your field  
| Boyd, “Why America is self-segregating” (Bb)  
| Excerpts from Halverson, “Content Strategy” (Bb)  
| #amwriting (Wednesday each week)  
| POTW (Wednesday each week)  
| Academic social media project due April 8 (Week 11) |
Weeks 12-16
How do communities and organizations use social media?
- Ready.gov Hurricane toolkit (Bb)
- Social media policies/guidelines: Intel, Kodak, others (Bb)
- “Constrained Agency in Corporate Social Media Policy” (Bb)
- Excerpts from Halverson, “Content Strategy” (Bb)
- Excerpts from Welchman, “Managing Chaos”

#amwriting (Wednesday each week)

POTW (Wednesday each week)

Content strategy project due May 6 (Week 15—final week of class)

Final exam day is May 13. Debrief and wrap-up.

Course Conduct

In general, class meetings will be a mixture of lecture, discussion, and workshop time or small-group activity. My ultimate goal is **praxis**; putting our collective knowledge into action, usually in individual and workshop-style activities (inventing, composing, revising, reviewing, or otherwise doing and making) and large- or small-group roundtable discussions. This means that it is vital that you come to class each day prepared to work and prepared to interact with myself and your colleagues in ways that contribute to our learning goals.

I expect a lot out of you—but I also have high expectations for myself. I promise that I will
- Be on time and prepared for discussion.
- Read everything that I’ve asked you to read.
- Do what I can to make the material interesting and class engaging.
- Provide prompt, helpful feedback to your written work.
- Be flexible and willing to make changes as the need arises.

Come to class meetings prepared

Along with writing materials for note-taking and in-class activities, bring textbooks and other required materials to class each day having read and taken notes on all texts assigned on the course schedule. I expect that you will read assigned chapters or articles prior to class; this will ensure your ability to contribute to discussions and other activities.

In discussion, remember to listen as well as speak. Pay attention to whomever is speaking in discussion and refrain from working on material for other classes. Participate when it is your turn to speak; share your opinion, expertise, or question, and respect the opinions and experiences of others.

Understand late work and revision policies

Post assignments on time. I am understanding of occasional late work, but this should not be habitual. It is up to you to prioritize learning activities in this class.
- Habitual late homework (beyond three times) will receive 10% point reductions
- Late work for major projects will earn a 10% reduction in grade
- I will not accept major projects more than 3 calendar days late
- The last day to submit late work will be posted in Blackboard

I am on your side, but you are responsible for you: keep up with your assignments and your grades. It is not the teacher’s responsibility to tell you what you have or haven’t turned in. Grades will be available in Blackboard so all you have to do is regularly check to make sure you have grades posted for all work.

I accept revisions on major projects, provided that you meet formally with me to discuss feedback on your project, a revision agenda, and a timeline for completion. You can find the complete revise and resubmit policy on Blackboard.

**Practice professional communication in email**

Email is among the more important professional media we use today, and I expect you will use your university email account for this course. As the class is a writing course, I expect that you will practice what we’re learning. We will explore this further in the course, but professional email includes a **meaningful subject line** and a **complete inquiry**, and uses **language appropriate for the writer’s context**.

- Unprofessional emails will result in non-response.
- I will email announcements and information via blackboard to your islander.tamucc.edu email account. You may set up email forwarding if you wish, but you are responsible for checking email. Missing emails is not an excuse for missed work or announcements.
- I will commonly respond to Blackboard or email requests within 24 hours, but you can expect a response within 3 days. I generally do not answer emails over the weekend.

**Social Accounts and Privacy**

We will use a variety of social accounts in this class. These are public accounts, and thus searchable and potentially scalable: you can't control who finds what, how, and where. To protect your privacy you may create a pseudonym or alias for any account I ask you to use. At the same time, I strongly encourage you to consider the long-term value of establishing these accounts under your own name or a professional alias. Having accounts where you conduct yourself professionally might well be an asset to your online presence, proving to be useful elements of portfolios you might eventually rely on when applying for jobs or schools in the future.

**Learn to use our technology**

As you might rightly assume, a course titled “Writing for Social Media” is entirely imbricated with technology: the class is about technology, it meets in a computer lab, and it works because of, as a result of, and in dialogue with technology. This means a handful of things:

- **Tech happens.** Difficulty with your computer or technology is not an acceptable excuse for late work, whether those are reading responses or one of our major projects. Practice agency by backing up your work, ensuring your technology is updated within your means and the expectations of coursework, and saving early & often.

- **You should learn something new about digital technology.** While I do not expect you to become an expert in HTML5 in five weeks, for example, I do expect you to push beyond your current technical knowledge. The days of separating technical knowledge from literacy knowledge are long past. Ultimately, you are responsible for your command of technology as well as course content. I will help you do this and provide
resources to support you, but if you are having difficulty it is your responsibility to a) ask for help and b) look for tutorials and supplementary material that work for you.

- **Learn from failure.** A spirit of inquiry and experiment is just as important as particular technical skills in this course. "Showing up" with broken or malfunctioning work is far better than showing up with an excuse, and sometimes we can learn more from your broken webtext than some slick Squarespace module. Your honest effort is more interesting to me than perfect work.

- **Manage your distraction machine.** I do not have a cell phone or laptop policy for managing personal technology in the classroom. As we'll study extensively in this class, mobile phones are powerful writing devices and can be useful personal research tools—and I will ask you to use them as such. Some students need their mobile device to augment their hearing or note-taking, and other students may have child care or emergency responsibilities that will necessitate discreet use of cell phones. I expect that you will participate and be present in class, but your attention is ultimately your responsibility and your screen is your business. Importantly, be sensitive to how your technology use may distract other students in the room.

### Course Policies

#### Notice to Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.

#### Statement of Civility

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

#### Attendance

The discussions and work we will undertake during class time are critical to your success in the course. I fully expect you to come to class for every class meeting. I also have three young children and realize that life invades school. Things occasionally happen that may keep you from coming. I will excuse absences for illness, for personal emergency, and for University-
related business as defined by the current Student Handbook, provided you furnish some documentation. You are responsible for making arrangements for make-up work for excused absences.

- If you miss three or more classes without reasonable explanation, I will deduct 10% from your final grade
- Two tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one's own work.)

In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in:

- first offense = no credit for assignment
- subsequent offenses = failure of class

In general terms, students are expected to "demonstrate a high level of maturity, self-direction and ability to manage their own affairs" and to "conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty." Instances of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi General Academic Policies and Regulations as listed in the current catalog.

**Dropping a Class**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 10, 2020, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of "W" this term.
**Grade Appeal Process**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Academic Advising**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.