Course description:
An applied use of written, oral and visual communication skills for reporting agricultural research, current events, and sales.

Instructor:
Dr. Rhonda M. Hoffman
Associate Professor – Animal Science/Horse Science
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I have to divide my time between my offices at the Horse Science Center and the Stark Agribusiness and Agriscience building. Office hours will be posted on each door. I have an open door policy, so if I am in and the door is open, please feel free to speak with me. If you need a guaranteed meeting time, please make an appointment.

Text and Required Materials:
There is no required text. Lecture handouts and assignments will be provided in class or on D2L. You may wish to purchase a 3-ring binder or other folder to keep your notes organized.

We will be using the computers extensively. If you do not have one already, it is required that you purchase a USB Flash drive (“Jump drive”) to maintain your files. These are available at nearly any store that sells computers or computer products. USB drives are commonly available in 4 to 16 GB as well as higher (or lower) storage capacities. Although there are smaller drives available, the drives with 4 GB or more will be most useful to you in the long run and offer you more storage for your money. I checked Staples, Target, Wal-Mart, Best Buy and amazon.com for approximate prices:


Course objectives:
• Learn to read scientific publications and internet information with a discerning mind.
• Recognize strengths in written communication, oral presentations and visual design.
• Become more comfortable with public speaking.
• Practice skills associated with resume design and cover letter writing.
• Use PowerPoint as an effective tool to enhance oral communication.
• Understand what makes a website/webpage effective.
• Organize written material and graphics, and then design a basic website.
• Use media skills to enhance your ability to be an advocate and ambassador of agriculture.
Evaluation procedures:
This class focuses on utilizing different media (written, oral, visual graphics) to support points that you wish to make as an ambassador of agriculture. Therefore, you should consider the professionalism and the quality your work at all times. You may have fantastic ideas and cutting-edge material; however, if the written, oral or visual presentation of the material is sloppy, thrown together at the last minute, and lacks professionalism, it will be obvious to everyone. As a result, your audience may be led to believe that your ideas are sloppy, too. The grade that you earn will reflect the quality of your work.

• Introductory presentation, WDYDWYD? 100 pts
  (30 seconds to 2 min)
• Informative presentation (3–5 min) 100 pts
• Persuasive presentation (7–9 min) 100 pts
• Persuasive presentation bibliography 50 pts
• Evaluations of other class members’ presentations 60 pts
• Self-evaluation of your presentations 25 pts
• Resume and cover letter (100 pts each) 200 pts
• In-class or D2L mini-assignments (5 x 25 pts each) 125 pts
• Class participation 40 pts
• Website 200 pts
TOTAL 1000 pts

Grading scale:
\[
\begin{align*}
& \geq 90\% = A; \\
& 86–89\% = B+; \\
& 80–85\% = B; \\
& 76–79\% = C+; \\
& 70–75\% = C; \\
& 66–69\% = D+; \\
& 60–65\% = D; \\
& < 60\% = F.
\end{align*}
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Attendance policy:
Attendance for lecture will not be maintained; however, since much of the material in this class is learned in a hands-on manner, missing class may result in a lack of understanding material that may be critical in completing your homework assignments. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain missed lecture material, either from the instructor or a classmate. I do not give my personal lecture notes to anyone. Any additional notes taken during class must be acquired from your peers.

There are 60 points of your grade that are earned through evaluation of your class members’ presentations. If you are absent on the days that other class members are presenting, you will lose points for that day.

Having worked my own way through college, I am well aware that you may have work commitments; however, your work schedule is not an excuse for missed classes, incomplete or poor quality work.
Late assignments:
Presentations are due on time! In the real world, a missed presentation could result in loss of a client, lost funding, lost opportunity, embarrassment to your boss/company, and/or loss of your job. In this class, missing and scheduling a make-up time for your presentation ruins the schedule for everyone else in the class. Presentations that are late will NOT be accepted unless you have an excused absence, including death of an immediate family member, illness (with doctor's note), serious emergency (with documentation), or approved university extracurricular activities. If you are sick with a fever, please take care of yourself and see your doctor or go to student health services.

Written and D2L assignments are due on time. Unlike the presentations, written and D2L assignments turned in late will be accepted; however, a penalty of one letter grade (e.g. -10 points out of 100) will be added for each class day past the due date. It is not fair to everyone who worked hard to complete their assignment on time to accept late assignments without penalty.

Classroom policies:
Cell phones should be turned off prior to entering the classroom. Individual conversations during lecture periods are disrespectful and disruptive to the rest of the class. Those who are persistently disruptive during lecture may be asked to leave the classroom. Those who are disruptive during other students' presentations will be asked to leave, and their presentation grade will be penalized.

The computers ahead of you are a great source of distraction. If it is my opinion that you are surfing excessively, “facebooking,” typing or working on other assignments during the lecture portion of class, you will lose participation points. If you are surfing or typing during your classmates' presentations, you will lose ALL points for your peer evaluation that day as well as your participation points.

Academic misconduct:
It is expected that all work you complete for this course is your own. The University policy for academic misconduct will be followed. Academic misconduct includes the following behaviors: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating any such act. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

1) **Plagiarism.** The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one’s own without proper acknowledgment.

2) **Cheating.** Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.

3) **Fabrication.** Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

4) **Facilitation.** Helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic misconduct.

Any student suspected of committing academic misconduct may be asked to meet with me to discuss the situation. If you are found responsible for committing an act of academic misconduct, you will be given a failing grade for the semester and reported to the Director of ABAS and the Assistant Dean for Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services for disciplinary action.
Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities:
If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation, or if you have questions related to any accommodations for testing, note taking, reading, etc, please speak with me as soon as possible. Students may also contact the Office of Disabled Students’ Services (898-2783) with questions about such services.

Do you have a lottery scholarship?
To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 cumulative GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web at http://scholarships.web.mtsu.edu/telsconteligibility.htm, or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

Important dates for Spring 2011:
January 13: Classes begin.
January 17: Martin Luther King Jr. holiday – no classes.
January 19: Deadline for students to add a class.
January 26: Deadline for students to drop a course without a grade.
March 7-13: Spring Break – no classes.
March 25: Last day for students to drop a course with a grade of “W”.
April 20: Deadline for students to withdraw from the University.
April 27: Last day of classes.
April 28: Study Day.
April 29–May 5: Final exams.
May 7: Commencement.
May 9: Deadline for faculty to submit final grades.

The Fine Print:
The instructor reserves the right to modify the information in this syllabus if deemed appropriate during the course of this class. Any modifications will be announced in class with a reasonable time frame considered for planning purposes.
### Tentative Course Outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>Course introduction. Why Media is important in Agriculture.</td>
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<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr holiday — No class.</td>
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<td>The power of public speaking, and speaking in pictures.</td>
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<td>Working with visual media. Use of color, images, cropping images effectively, resizing to reduce file size.</td>
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<td>Jan 24–26</td>
<td><strong>Assignment Due: Introductory presentation. WDYDWYD?</strong></td>
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<td>Sensationalized agriculture.</td>
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<td>Evaluating written and internet media. Ethics.</td>
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<td>How statistics can tell lies — and how facts may be distorted.</td>
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<td>Article searching, internet resources.</td>
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<td>Improving speech. Presentation skills.</td>
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<td>DEATH by PowerPoint (how to avoid the pitfalls) and Elements of Good PowerPoint.</td>
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<td>Constructive criticism. Evaluating others.</td>
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<td>Feb 11–18</td>
<td><strong>Assignment Due: Informative presentation, Peer evals</strong></td>
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<td>What makes a presentation persuasive?</td>
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<td>Thinking about media and websites. TIME Magazine top websites...what makes them effective?</td>
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<td>Introduction to websites: what designs work for you?</td>
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<td>Website design mini-assignment.</td>
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<td>Building a website, Dreamweaver basics. MUST HAVE JUMP DRIVE!</td>
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<td>Mar 7–12</td>
<td>Spring break — No class</td>
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<td>Mar 16–28</td>
<td><strong>Assignment Due: Persuasive presentation, Peer evals</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 30</td>
<td><strong>Assignment Due: Self-evaluation.</strong></td>
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<td>More web-editing skills, creating and linking additional pages.</td>
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<td>The career challenge.</td>
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<td>Resumes and cover letters. Interview skills.</td>
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<td>D2L Mini-assignment. Careers and Job search sites.</td>
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<td>Apr 20</td>
<td><strong>Assignment Due: Resume and cover letter</strong></td>
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<td>Additional web-editing as needed, adding hot spots, flash.</td>
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<td>Apr 27</td>
<td>Last day of class, Wrap-up, Website help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 29</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM Friday, April 29, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (NOTE early time!!) WEBSITES DUE</strong></td>
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