

# CM331

## Writing for Mass Communication

Fall 2014

Wednesdays 6 - 9

Instructor: Anderson

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Office Hours: Wed 5-6

### The Class

Writing for Mass Communication, or CM 331 (D1), CM331 is the third writing course in the curriculum for students majoring in mass communications, advertising or public relations. The materials presented in this course are designed to strengthen writing skills and prepare students for careers in the communications industry. The class will culminate with a professional writing portfolio for each student.

### The Professor

Meghan Keaney Anderson is director of product marketing for HubSpot, a marketing software company in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At HubSpot, Meghan oversees the launches, internal education and market strategy for the company's fifteen-component marketing software platform. Meghan came to HubSpot through the company's 2011 acquisition of Performable, a marketing analytics and automation company focused on multi-channel analytics. Prior to Performable, Meghan worked as senior director of communications at United Way of Massachusetts Bay where she oversaw online communications and created the organization's first social media strategy. Meghan also teaches *Writing for Mass Communication* as an adjunct professor at Boston University's College of Communication.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Boston College, where she graduated *magna cum laude*, and a Master of Science degree in public relations from Boston University, where she graduated with honors and two key writing awards. Most days she can be found on Twitter [@meghkeaney](https://twitter.com/meghkeaney), or wandering around with a very large coffee in hand.

### Getting in Touch With Me

Email: [meghankeaney@gmail.com](mailto:meghankeaney@gmail.com)

Cell: 781-962-3723

Office Hours: Wednesdays 5-6 by appointment

Class Website: <http://www.keaneyanderson.com/class>

### Required Reading

2013 or 2014 edition of The Associated Press Stylebook

Reading assigned during class or over email

## Writing Assignments

Assignment	Due	Weight
Participation	Every class	Scale tipper
Webpage	September 24th	10%
Email & Landing Page	October 1	15%
Press Release	October 8	15%
Feature Article	October 29	20%
Blog	Throughout Semester - Final Dec 3	20%
Final Assignment	December 10	20%

### **September 3** | Building Your Professional Profile

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There are 250,000 college students in Boston alone. You may not come across them all, but for every internship you pursue, every job offer you desire, you're going to be up against a good number of them. This course is all about developing a professional writing portfolio that will help you stand out from the crowd. We'll start by building you a home base for your writing through <http://theme.wordpress.com/> then spend the semester adding to it and perfecting your writing.

### **September 10** | Building a Professional Blog

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The blog assignment is cornerstone to this CM331 class. Students will create and maintain a professional blog throughout the semester showcases their professional interests and growing expertise. The blog will culminate in the blog showcase on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and will have a minimum of eight posts. We'll have some time in class throughout the semester for blog writing and brainstorming topics.

### **September 17** | SEO and Writing for Web

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The Internet radically changed the way we find and consume content. Search engine rank has become a major factor in writing across genres from web copy to journalism. This class will cover how to optimize your writing for search engines and for the way readers consume content online. The assignment for next week will be to draft a set of homepage and subpage copy that is written in web-style and search friendly. **Deliverables for next week: 1) Homepage copy 2) a list of search terms**

### **September 24** | Email Marketing

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Email marketing is one of the most challenging and yet important channels for marketers. The vast majority of marketing emails are ignored or marked as spam. This class will cover the pitfalls of bad email marketing and prepare you to write email copy that actually gets read. The assignment for next week will be to create an email and landing page. **Deliverables for next week: 1) A full email with subject, sender and CAN-SPAM compliance 2) a best-in-class landing page.**

### **October 1** | Writing for Public Relations

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Writing for PR is all about knowing what makes something newsworthy and how to position your announcement in the context of a larger news angle. This class will cover the various types of media relations writing and some best practices in getting pitches right. The assignment for next week will be to write a press release based on a collection of facts. **Deliverables for next week: 1) Perfectly written press release.**

### **October 8** | Journalism and News Writing

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The feature assignment is another hallmark of this class. In this class we'll revisit what makes something newsworthy, talk about hard news vs. features, and delve into angles. This class will also introduce the feature assignment, due October 29.

### **October 15** | Interview Techniques and Blog Check-in

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On October 15th we'll talk through your feature topics and explore the skill of interviewing and finding the story. If there's time, we'll also take a look at how your blogs are shaping up and do some peer reviewing of each other's work.

### **October 22** | Workshop Features

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This class marks the final opportunity to workshop your work-in-progress features and get feedback from each other before submitting on October 30<sup>th</sup>. We'll also talk about how the journalism industry as a whole is changing and examine some new skills that are emerging as critical for journalists. **Features are due next week.**

### **October 29** | Feature Article Read Aloud

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This class will give us the chance to hear some, hopefully all of the journalism features. We'll also have a writing workshop for your blogs and talk about the remaining semester.

### **November 5** | Speechwriting

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Some of the greatest speeches in history were not written by the speaker, but by a talented writer behind the scenes. This class will explore the structure and style of a good speech and give the class an opportunity to try out some speechwriting of its own.

### **November 12** | Writing Ad Copy

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Just do it. You're worth it. Got Milk? Can you hear me now? This class will talk about the art and science of ad copy. We'll cover great examples throughout history and cover how to do it well for your own ads.

### **November 19** | Building a Marketing Strategy (Final Assignment Preview)

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A marketing strategy is what pulls all of the various tactics we've covered together into an influential campaign. We'll address what goes into a marketing strategy and give a preview of the final assignment.

### **November 26** | No Class

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Enjoy the stuffing and cranberry sauce.

### **December 3** | Blog Showcase

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This is it! The culmination of your class blogs. Blogs at this point should be in tip-top shape, optimized for search, and compelling for readers. We will spend part of the class presenting each blog and part talking about how to grow your blog's audience.

### **December 10** | Final Class and Marketing Campaign Pitches

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Part of your final grade is the presentation pitch you give for your campaign. More than a read-through of your document, this pitch should be crafted as if the class were the company you are trying to influence to go with your campaign. It should identify the challenges the company or organization faces and how this particular campaign will help address them.

## **Academic Code**

Be sure to read and comply with Boston University's universal academic conduct code for undergraduate students. It is available at: [bu.edu/academics](http://bu.edu/academics)

## **Plagiarism ☹**

Plagiarism is the act of representing someone else's creative and/or academic work as your own, in full or in part. It can be an act of commission, in which one intentionally appropriates the words, pictures or ideas of another, or it can be an act of omission, in which one fails to acknowledge/document/give credit to the source, creator and/or the copyright owner of those works, pictures or ideas. Any fabrication of materials, quotes or sources, other than that created in a work of fiction, is also plagiarism. Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense that you can commit and can result in probation, suspension or expulsion.

Note: Handing in assignments you've written for other classes is also unacceptable.

## **Deadlines**

Assignments are due at the start of each class period. I will only make exceptions to deadlines in extreme cases. Assignments can be brought to class or emailed to me. If you are sick or can't make class, assignments should be emailed to me.

## **Emailing Assignments**

If you email, you are responsible for the safe and functional delivery of the attachment. If the attachment is missing or incorrectly formatted it will count as late. Emailed attachments should be named in the following way: Assignment name – your full name. For example, "Feature assignment – Meghan Keaney Anderson." If you do not use this format, I will count it as late.

## **Rewrites**

- \* Rewrites are accepted on work below a grade of 70 (C-).
- \* Rewrites not accepted on the final assignment or the blog assignment
- Rewrites will not be accepted on late assignments.
- \* Grading for rewrites: First draft—50% | Rewrite draft—50%

## **Recording of Classes**

Please note that classroom proceedings for this course might be recorded for purposes including, but not limited to, student illness, religious holidays, disability accommodations, or student course review. Note also that recording devices are prohibited in the classroom except with the instructor's permission.

## **Laptops/Devices**

Laptops and other devices are welcomed in class. There may be times when I'll ask you to close them, but we'll be doing a lot of writing in class so you may find it helpful to have them. I trust you to resist the urge to check Facebook, Reddit, Twitter, and so forth during class. Stay strong my hyper-connected friends. The Internet's not going anywhere.

## Grading Matrix

**A - Excellent** Perfect understanding of the assignment.  
Grammar and mechanics are nearly perfect.  
Language is persuasive and informative.  
Content is presented in a clear, logical manner.  
Work is suitable for a professional writing portfolio.

**B – Very Good** Near perfect understanding of the assignment.  
Some issues with coherence, structure or content.  
Several mechanical errors need to be corrected.  
Language is good but shows some weakness in style,  
clarity or originality.

**C – Average** A significant issue needs to be corrected.  
Writing is awkward or not in the right style.  
Points are not fully developed or lack adequate persuasion.  
There are too many common grammar errors.

**D - Poor** The objective of the assignment was missed.  
Writing is incomplete. Thoughts are incoherent.  
There are an unacceptable amount of mechanical errors.

All assignments will receive a numerical grade: i.e. 80-83 (B-), 84-86 (B), 87-89 (B+)