

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

Bachelor of Arts in Communication: Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts

College: Arts and Sciences

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Approved by: Dr. Greg Handel, Dean

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, Student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts. Students pursuing a degree in Communication polish speaking, writing, and multimedia skills through experiences in and out of the classroom. Innovative courses prepare students for hundreds of jobs that require a foundation of communication skills. TV anchors, radio show hosts, bloggers, photojournalists, graphic designers, social media managers, speech writers, public relations specialists, reporters and scores of others all rise according to their communications skills. Available concentrations include Strategic Communication, Broadcast and Digital Media Production and Multimedia Journalism. **Strategic Communication:** Encompassing organizational communication and public relations, this concentration offers a course of study for students to learn how individuals and organizations use communication and media to deliver messages to targeted audiences. Courses will focus on how organizations and media influence opinions and the behavior of key publics. The curriculum will emphasize an ethical approach and will analyze societal effects of strategic communication practices.

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Broadcast and Digital Media Production: Students will learn to create, produce, and disseminate broadcast media of varied genres and styles. The knowledge and skills learned will prepare students for broadcast media and broadcast production careers in industries such as television, radio, film, videos, and Web delivery. Through hands-on instruction, students learn to research, write, produce, and direct media rich content.

Multimedia Journalism: Informing the public through accurate and well-written stories remains at the core of journalism. Beyond the basics of reporting and writing, journalists today must adapt to changing technologies and become proficient in multimedia storytelling – combining text with images, sounds, videos, and graphics to reach diverse audiences. This concentration will prepare students for varied journalism careers in media industries such as newspapers, magazines, Web, and social media.

Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts Mission

Statement: The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts prepares students from diverse academic and cultural backgrounds for entry-level careers in a broad range of communication fields or advanced study. Grounded in a broad liberal arts tradition, the program of study incorporates current professional standards, hands-on experiences and technologies. The department is committed to promoting freedom of expression and understanding the social responsibilities with such freedom.

Student Learning Outcomes: To achieve the above mission and vision statements, the department adopted the following six Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).

Graduates will

1. Write clearly and correctly in formats appropriate for communication professionals
2. Speak clearly and correctly in presentations or other formats appropriate for communication professionals
3. Produce effective visual content for varied audiences and formats
4. Gather and critically analyze information from diverse sources
5. Understand and apply legal and ethical principles related to communication
6. Use current media technologies and understand their social and cultural influences

Assessment Methodology: A table below outlines the assessment process for the Communication undergraduate program.

- Faculty and Department Head meet during on-call week each fall and spring semesters to review assessment plan and measurements. Rubrics, rating scales, and other matters related to assessment tools are reviewed, revised, and implemented accordingly.
- Data are collected by the designated faculty for courses identified and returned to the Department Head or designated faculty member, who will upload the data

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to TaskStream or other University-designated portal.

- Department Head will analyze the data to determine student proficiency in meeting measurable outcomes.
- The Department Head will meet individually with faculty teaching courses from which assessment data are collected for their recommendations to revise course and assessment tools as part of continuous program improvement.
- The Department Head will discuss results with program faculty and the Department Advisory Council and solicit their input.
- Based on data analysis and meetings with faculty and Advisory Council members, the Department Head will then propose to the program faculty changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment cycle, and, if needed, curricula and program changes.
- The Department Head will approve changes as needed based on the above steps.

Summary of Key Findings:

- Overall, the department plans to redesign assessment instruments to specifically state SLOs.
- Additionally, assessment restructuring process will also ensure that concepts of legal and ethical procedure, oral presentation skills, and visual design standards and procedures are enforced throughout the curriculum.
- Current events and historic, influential components of journalistic/communications history will be incorporated through the curriculum as well.

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Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Communication graduates will write clearly and correctly in formats appropriate for communication professionals.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

COMM 1040: Writing Fundamentals for Communication Professionals

COMM 2510: Writing for Mass Media

COMM 4700: Capstone Course

COMM 4910: Internship

Measure 1.1. (Direct)

COMM 1040: Taught for the first time in Spring 2017, this introductory writing course for communication majors targets improving the fundamentals of writing clearly and correctly. The signature assessment for this course is a test given at both the beginning and the end of the semester. The test identifies components of writing that are vital to the success of a communications professional. Students will be expected to demonstrate strong comprehension of these concepts in future required classes, specifically COMM 2510.

Target: 70% of possible points

Finding: Target Met. Including only students that took both tests, the initial testing average was 59.7%. The second testing average increased by 14.25%, resulting in an average of 73.95%. Out of 20 students, only one scored lower on the second test than the first.

Analysis: While the improvement from the start of the semester to the end was significant and consistent, there is still an overall deficiency in the writing, grammar, spelling, and punctuation skills of incoming students. These deficiencies create problems as students face comprehensive writing assignments in more advanced classes within the department, which is the primary reason this class was established. It is challenging to address all areas of deficiency within the period of one semester, but the instructor believes that this class will contribute to improvement of student writing.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The instructor recommends that this class continue to be required for all students entering into the Department of New Media, Journalism and Communication Arts. As the course develops, more measures of progress will be implemented (rubrics, quizzes, etc.) to collect specific data regarding which areas of writing basics students find most challenging.

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COMM 2510: Required of all majors, the prerequisites for this course are ENGL 1010, ENGL 1020 and COMM 1040. All require a “C” or higher. To assess students’ abilities to write clearly and correctly, the signature assessment is a writing test administered at the conclusion of the semester.

Target: 70% of possible points

Finding:

Fall 2016: Including only students that took the test, the average writing assessment grade was 80.4%.

Spring 2017: Including only students that took the test, the average writing assessment grade was 62%.

Analysis: While the majority of students can identify class concepts correctly in a multiple choice context, they still struggle to put these concepts into practice consistently and correctly. Grammatical errors are still quite prevalent, but this will be the last group of students to take COMM 2510 without having passed/tested out of COMM 1040. The overall writing style required for this class (write from a fact-based, unbiased point of view, third-person perspective, etc.) is challenging for students coming from a background of primarily academic-style writing. Students do make progress as they pursue this particular writing style throughout the semester, but the number of AP style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes present within the writing often overshadow this improvement.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The instructor recommends that this class continue to be required as part of core curriculum for all students pursuing a degree from the Department of New Media, Journalism and Communication Arts. Regardless of which path students pursue, a strong writing foundation is essential for success. The instructor plans to continue to emphasize the importance of clear, correct writing while also observing and documenting any differences that might occur in the skill level of students that have completed COMM 1040 prior to taking COMM 2510.

COMM 4700: The capstone course is now required of all graduating seniors majoring in Communication. The course was taught for the first time in Spring 2017 by the Department’s Wise Endowed Chair in Journalism, Raymond Strother. To assess their ability to write clearly and correctly, students were assigned writing assignments that reinforced the lectures and text: The goal of the course was to teach the obligations and ethics of Journalism in American society. As a guide, we used the William Kovach book, *The Elements of Journalism*. The writing assignments required more thought than recitation from the textbooks. Students were challenged to understand and think. To understand the evolution of the American tradition of free speech, much attention was given to the history of journalists, publications and movements such as Yellow Journalism and how propaganda was used to start wars and change public perception of social issues.

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Target: 80% of possible points

Finding:

Essay on Journalism as an Act of Character. The class wrote about Carol Marin, Howell Raines, Jayson Blaire and journalists' responsibility to conscience. Students were graded on original thought and writing skills. Most of them drew from previous lectures to flesh out what they read in *The Elements of Journalism* on the subject. Average Grade on Assignment: 82

Essay on "All the President's Men." The lessons from this part of the course were about responsibility to truth and validation. Most students had never read a book about journalism or journalists and they all remarked on the hard work that went into Woodward's and Bernstein's efforts to expose the great American Nixon scandal. Their reading of the book was stretched out over the course with quizzes given on each section until they had completed the work. They were also graded on writing style and competence. Average Grade on Assignment: 78

Essay on Fake News: Students were expected to research the term, "fake news" and understand how it originates and how it can be identified. Average grade on assignment: 75

Analysis: This is basically a hybrid course combining some weeks with online assignments and lectures and classroom lecture and discussion. Especially during weeks when assignments were online, students tended to procrastinate. The remedy to this was weekly quizzes that were presented within the audio lectures. Also, the instructor sent a constant stream of email messages to the students alerting them to deadlines and warnings about their responsibilities. As a result of a hard line on deadlines, few students missed assignments. If they had questions, they were encouraged to make telephone calls or send email messages. Students were bereft of current events.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: I suggest more reading assignments in COMM classes taken prior to COMM 4700. If they were deficient in current events, they also lacked an understanding of history. This led them to conclude in exams that Gutenberg invented movable type in 1755 or even later and The Bill of Rights preceded the original writing of the Constitution.

The instructor will modify the organization of the course material into distinct silos or history, responsibility, ethics and current events. This is a meaningful course and I recommend that no student earns graduation without completing it.

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The department will also establish a course rubric for either a major assignment or student portfolio that specifically addresses Student Learning Outcomes.

COMM 4910: All Communication majors must now complete an internship. The supervisor of the internship, a professional not on faculty, assesses each student's ability to write clearly and clearly. Supervisors rate students on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent).

Target: Four out of five possible points (4/5).

Finding:

Fall 2016: Two students received a score of 5, and one student a score of 4, with an average of 4.6 or "good."

Spring 2017: Two students received a score of 5, and two students received a score of 4, with an average of 4.5 or "good."

Analysis: Overall, students demonstrated an ability to write clearly and correctly for an entry-level communication professional. The number of students completing an internship is expected to increase.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: With the new curriculum establish in 2016 for this major, all majors are required to complete an internship, which was an option for prior concentrations no longer offered (organizational communication, rhetoric, and mass communication). Faculty across the curriculum must place a focus on writing. A revision of the supervisor's evaluation form for this course is recommended so it ties specifically to each of the Student Learning Outcomes.

Measure: 1.2. (Indirect)

For the first time since the department was formed two years ago, graduating seniors in Spring 2017 were surveyed on their perception of the department curriculum having taught them how to write clearly and clearly in formats and ways appropriate for communication professionals. The 10-question survey was administered through SurveyMonkey and sent to the 11 Communication graduates, of whom 7 responded for a 63.6% response rate.

Students were asked to rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the SLO 1: Overall, your communication curriculum has helped you learn to write clearly and correctly in formats appropriate for communication professionals.

Target: Ideally, 100% of students would answer 5/5.

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Finding: Four students rated SLO 1 as a 5/5 and three students rated SLO 1 as a 4/5, resulting in 100% of those surveyed indicating they agreed or strongly agreed that the curriculum prepared them to write.

Analysis: Overall, students indicated the strength of this SLO in their program of study.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The department must continue to emphasize the importance of good writing across the curriculum.

SLO 2. Communication graduates will speak clearly and correctly in presentations or other formats appropriate for communication professionals.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

COMM 1010: Public Speaking
COMM 4700: Capstone Course
COMM 4910: Internship

Measure 2.1. (Direct)

COMM 1010: In this first communication course requiring presentations, the signature assessment is the Persuasive Speech. COMM majors were placed in a Freshman Interest Group (FIG) section for fall 2016. Students were graded using a rubric standardized for all course sections.

Target: 80% of possible points

Finding: For the 13 students in the Fall 2016 FIG, students achieved an overall average of 91.68% for the Persuasive Speech.

Analysis: Students exceeded the Acceptable Target of 80% and are approaching the Ideal Target of 100%

Action-Decision or Recommendation: Develop a more thorough instructional strategy for both written and oral references required for the Persuasive Speech.

COMM 4700: In Spring 2017, this now required course was taught for the first time since the department was formed two years ago. The goal of the course was to teach the obligations and ethics of Journalism in American society. As a guide, we used the William Kovach book, *The Elements of Journalism*. The writing assignments required more thought than recitation from the textbooks. Students were challenged to understand and think. To understand the evolution of the American tradition of free speech, much attention was given to the history of journalists, publications and

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movements such as Yellow Journalism and how propaganda was used to start wars and change public perception of social issues.

Target: 80% of possible points

Finding: The class of 18 students concentrated on the importance of The First Amendment and discussed governmental, economic and cultural controls on the media. Each student was required to recite the amendment in class and to discuss its importance. This gave them experience in public speaking. We also discussed that the first obligation of journalism was to the truth. To assess understanding, students wrote a paper discussing the First Amendment and the governmental, economic and cultural controls on the media.

Analysis: Overall, students scored an average of 77% on the First Amendment essay assignment.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: While students did benefit from participating in these activities and were able to demonstrate basic competency, the SLO must be more specifically addressed across the curriculum. The Department of New Media, Journalism, and Communication Arts plans to revise course assessment tools in order to specifically state and measure competencies relevant to this SLO.

COMM 4910: Supervisors at sites evaluate communication interns on their ability to speak clearly and correctly. The evaluations conducted at the midpoint and end of the internship require the supervisors to rate interns on a scale of 1-5 (weak to excellent) on ability to “speak with correct grammar.”

Target: Four out of five possible points (4/5).

Finding:

Fall 2016: Two students received a score of 5, and one student a score of 4, with an average of 4.6 or “good.”

Spring 2017: All four students evaluated received a score of 5, or excellent.

Analysis: The department’s curriculum has traditionally focused on oral communication and presentations. With the new curriculum establish in 2016 for this major, all majors are required to complete an internship, which was an option for prior concentrations no longer offered (organizational communication, rhetoric, and mass communication). Faculty across the curriculum must continue to place a focus on oral communication skills. A revision of the supervisor’s evaluation form for this course is recommended so it ties specifically to each of the Student Learning Outcomes.

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Measure: 2.2. (Indirect)

For the first time since the department was formed two years ago, graduating seniors in Spring 2017 were surveyed on their perception of the department curriculum having taught them how to speak clearly and clearly in formats and ways appropriate for communication professionals. The 10-question survey was administered through SurveyMonkey and sent to the 11 Communication graduates, of whom 7 responded for a 63.6% response rate.

Students were asked to rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the SLO 2: Overall, your communication curriculum has helped you learn to speak clearly and correctly in presentations or other formats appropriate for communication professionals.

Target: Ideally, 100% of students would answer 5/5.

Finding: Five students rated this SLO as 5/5 (strongly agree), one rated it 4/5 (agree) and 1 rated it 3/5 (neither agree nor disagree).

Analysis: Overall, 85.72% of students survey indicated they strongly agreed or agreed with this SLO.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Although the percentage is high for those who were positive about the outcome for this SLO, the department needs to ensure opportunities for oral presentations are available and/or required.

SLO 3. Communication graduates will produce effective visual content for varied audiences and formats.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

COMM 1010: Public Speaking
COMM 3260: Reporting and Writing for New Media
COMM 4910: Internship

Measure: 3.1 (Direct)

COMM 1010: In this first communication course, students must produce and use an effective visual aid for the final speech, the persuasive speech. The FIG section was

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taught in Fall 2016 only. Speeches are graded using a standard course rubric with a category for this SLO:

- o Verbal message effectively supported, clarified and enhanced with appropriate visual aids. Demonstrates ability to use a variety of strategies. Speaker uses appropriate and respectful presentation aids; able to adapt to unexpected circumstances. (5)
- o Verbal message effectively supported, clarified and enhanced with appropriate visual aids. Demonstrates ability to use a variety of strategies. Speaker uses appropriate and respectful presentation aids; able to adapt to unexpected circumstances. (4)
- o Verbal message was supported and clarified with appropriate visual aids. Presentation aids are adequate, but not always utilized at the appropriate time. Speaker seemed uncomfortable with presentation media/technology. (3)
- o Verbal message was supported and clarified with appropriate visual aids. Presentation aids are adequate, but not always utilized at the appropriate time. Speaker seemed uncomfortable with presentation media/technology. (2)
- o Verbal message was poorly or not supported nor clarified with appropriate visual aids. Presentation aids were inadequate or inappropriate. Technical presentation problems (visibility and clarity) interfered with message comprehension. (1)

Target: 80% of possible points

Finding: The 13 communication majors, the average score was 4.61/5 or 92.3%. The score exceeded the acceptable target of 80% and approaches the ideal target of 100%.

Analysis: Because this is the first required communication class, many have never had instruction on guidelines to design an effective PowerPoint, for example, or how to incorporate them into a presentation. The instructor worked with students throughout the semester, resulting in the overall high average for this SLO as demonstrated in the final persuasive speech.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Continue to provide students with examples of effective and ineffective visual aids.

COMM 3260: Required of all majors, the prerequisite for this course is COMM 2510. A grade of “C” or higher is required. To assess students’ abilities to create effective visual content for varied audiences and formats, the signature assessment is the creation of an engagement campaign. Students choose a topic they are interested in and create a campaign to engage online users in supporting or sharing the campaign’s messaging. This requires students to share messaging on multiple platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Wordpress) using tools taught in class (Hootsuite, Canva, Twitter Analytics) to create effective content, including visual elements. Students submitted a campaign summary,

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which includes selecting the three most effective visual components from the campaign. At least one of these elements is required to be made using Canva.

Target: 80% of possible points

Finding: Students scored an average of 86.6% on the campaign summary assignment.

Analysis: While students are familiar with social media channels for their personal use, very few entered the classroom understanding the amount of strategy that is required to host an effective social media presence in addition to being quite unaware of the resources available to make the process of becoming efficient and effective much easier. Upon learning about some of these resources, like Canva, students were very excited to incorporate them into their messaging arsenal.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The instructor recommends that this class continue to serve as a requirement for any student pursuing a degree from the Department of New Media, Journalism and Communication Arts. Additionally, it will be imperative for this class to evolve with the new media industry. Students must be prepared to present their messaging across a diverse array of channels in order to be effective and successful in a professional setting. Effective visual communication for a brand or professional entity is often different than the visual communication that would be considered effective for personal use. This distinction, once made, will be invaluable to the student as he or she transitions into a professional setting.

COMM 4910: The supervisor's evaluation form does not specifically ask them to rate students on this SLO. Rather, supervisors rate students on their overall "competence in entry-level skills for communication, journalism, or mass communication. Thus, specific data for this SLO are unavailable.

Target: Four out of five possible points (4/5).

Finding:

Fall 2016: The three students evaluated for received a score of 5, or excellent.

Spring 2017: The four students evaluated received a score of 5, or excellent.

Analysis: In general, supervisors rated students as excellent in overall skills, though not specifically this SLO.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Revise the supervisor's form to specifically use the language of this SLO.

Measure: 3.2 (Indirect)

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For the first time since the department was formed two years ago, graduating seniors in Spring 2017 were surveyed on their perception of the department curriculum having taught them how to create visual content appropriate for communication professionals. The 10-question survey was administered through SurveyMonkey and sent to the 11 Communication graduates, of whom 7 responded for a 63.6% response rate.

Students were asked to rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the SLO 3: Overall, your communication curriculum has helped you learn to produce effective visual content for varied audiences and formats.

Target: Ideally, 100% of students would answer 5/5.

Finding: Four of the students rated this SLO as 5/5 (strongly agree), two rated it 4/5 (agree), and one rated it 2/5 (disagree).

Analysis: Although 85.71% of those responding strongly agreed or agreed with this SLO outcome, the department must continue to ensure the curriculum prepares students for this outcome.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Review the curriculum and courses to ensure this SLO is reinforced during a student's matriculation.

SLO 4. Communication graduates will gather and critically analyze information from diverse sources.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

COMM 2510: Writing for Mass Media

COMM 4700: Capstone

COMM 4910: Internship

Measure 4.1 (Direct)

COMM 2510: Required of all majors, the prerequisites for this course are ENGL 1010, ENGL 1020 and COMM 1040. All require a "C" or higher. To assess students' abilities to gather and critically analyze information, the signature assessment is the story submission assignment. This assignment requires students to cover a specific event and write an article about this event using a minimum of three sources. Students are grading using a five-category rubric. The rubric assesses the presence of proper headline and format; use of AP style; use of proper spelling, grammar and punctuation; development of an effective lead; and effective structure. In each category, a student can earn between zero and five points.

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Target: 70% of possible points

Finding:

Fall 2016: Excluding four students who did not complete the assignment, the average score for this semester was a 74.1%.

Spring 2017: The average grade for the final story assignment was 54%. This average is low due to the fact that some students did not take advantage of the opportunity to revise and resubmit after the editing process. Of those that did, the average score for this assignment was 85.3%.

Analysis: Students struggle to identify worthy sources, discern the most important point from a mass of information, and write correctly according to AP style. Grammatical errors are still quite prevalent, but this will be the last group of students to take COMM 2510 without having passed/tested out of COMM 1040. The overall writing style required for this class (write from a fact-based, unbiased point of view, do not use first or second person, etc.) is challenging for students coming from a background of primarily academic-style writing. Students do improve in this area throughout the semester, but the number of AP style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes present within the writing often overshadow this improvement.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The instructor recommends that this class continue to be required as part of core curriculum for all students pursuing a degree from the Department of New Media, Journalism and Communication Arts. Regardless of which path students pursue, a strong writing foundation is essential for success. The instructor plans to develop assignments that will specifically address and measure issues related to identifying appropriate source material.

COMM 4700: The writing assignments required more thought than recitation from the textbooks. Students were challenged to understand and think. To understand the evolution of the American tradition of free speech, much attention was given to the history of journalists, publications and movements such as Yellow Journalism and how propaganda was used to start wars and change public perception of social issues.

Target: 80% of possible points

Finding: Essay on Fake News

Students were expected to research the term, “fake news” and understand how it originates and how it can be identified.

Average grade on assignment: 75

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Analysis: Overall, students demonstrated a lack of knowledge about how to research and critically analyze information. While an average of 75 is a passing “C” grade, the goal should be 80 or a B.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The instructor will modify the course for next spring to incorporate more research and also recommends that the faculty ensure earlier courses in the program emphasize this important learning outcome.

COMM 4910: Supervisors rated students on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent) for their ability to “apply as appropriate knowledge obtained in past coursework, including media theory and research.” However, the specific evaluation of their ability to gather and critically analyze information was not specifically stated.

Target: Four out of five possible points (4/5).

Finding:

Fall 2016: Two students received a score of 5, and one student a score of 4, with an average of 4.6 or “good.”

Spring 2017: All four students evaluated received a score of 5, or excellent.

Analysis: Overall, internship supervisors rated interns as good or excellent.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Revise supervisor’s evaluation form to specifically use the current language for this SLO.

Measure 4.2 (Indirect)

For the first time since the department was formed two years ago, graduating seniors in Spring 2017 were surveyed on their perception of the department curriculum having taught them how to gather and analyze information from diverse sources. The 10-question survey was administered through SurveyMonkey and sent to the 11 Communication graduates, of whom 7 responded for a 63.6% response rate.

Students were asked to rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the SLO 4: Overall, your communication curriculum has helped you learn to gather and critically analyze information from diverse sources.

Target: Ideally, 100% of students would answer 5/5.

Finding: Two of the student surveyed rated this SLO as 5/5 (strongly agree), four rated it 4/5 (agree), and one rated it 3/5 (neither agree nor disagree). Overall, 85.71% of the students surveyed strongly agreed or agreed with this SLO.

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Analysis: Although the overall positive percentage is high, the fact that only two students strongly agreed with this SLO means the department must relook at its curriculum and determine how to strengthen this outcome.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Review program curriculum to scaffold this SLO throughout a student's matriculation.

SLO 5. Communication graduates will understand and apply legal and ethical principles related to communication.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

COMM 2040: Media Law

COMM 4700: Capstone

COMM 4910: Internship

Measure 5.1 (Direct)

COMM 2040: All communication majors are now required to take Media Law, which is taught by a lawyer in the College of Business and a professor who previously taught the course for the university's eliminated Department of Journalism. The signature assessment for this class is a multi-faceted evaluation of legal and ethical communications principles, which is administered at the end of the semester.

Target: 70% of possible points

Finding:

Fall 2016: The average on the assessment for the 19 enrolled students was a 75%, surpassing the acceptable target of 70% for this exam. The breakdown of grades is as follows:

A—3
B—4
C—7
D—4
F—1

Spring 2017: The average score for the final examination was 73.44% for the 17 students enrolled. The average score surpassed the acceptable target of 70%. The breakdown of grades is as follows:

A—7
B—7

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C—1

D—0

F—2

Analysis: The instructor has stated two major areas of concern: student attendance and students' general lack of reading assigned materials.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The instructor plans to deduct points after an established number of class absences and will have pop quizzes throughout the semester to motivate students to come to class prepared.

COMM 4700: The class concentrated on the importance of **The First Amendment** and discussed governmental, economic and cultural controls on the media. Each student was required to recite the amendment in class and to discuss its importance. This gave them experience in public speaking. We also discussed that the first obligation of journalism was to the truth.

Target: 80% of possible points

Finding:

Essay on Journalism as an Act of Character. The class wrote about Carol Marin, Howell Raines, Jayson Blaire and journalists' responsibility to conscience. Students were graded on original thought and writing skills. Most of them drew from previous lectures to flesh out what they read in *The Elements of Journalism* on the subject. Average Grade on Assignment: 82

Essay on "All the President's Men." The lessons from this part of the course were about responsibility to truth and validation. Most students had never read a book about journalism or journalists and they all remarked on the hard work that went into Woodward's and Bernstein's efforts to expose the great American Nixon scandal. Average Grade on Assignment: 78

Analysis: Overall, students demonstrated a lack of understanding of history, current event, and a journalist's role in a democracy.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The instructor will modify the organization of the course material next academic year into distinct silos for history, responsibility, law, ethics and current events. This is a meaningful course and I recommend that no student graduates with a communication degree without completing COMM 4700 with a grade of C or higher.

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COMM 4910: Internship supervisors evaluated students on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent): Student can accept responsibility for professional, legal, and ethical behavior expected by the internship site supervisor.”

Target: Four out of five possible points (4/5).

Finding:

Fall 2016: All three students evaluated received a score of 5, or excellent.

Spring 2017: All four students evaluated received a score of 5, or excellent.

Analysis: Students participating in internships met their supervisor’s expectations for this SLO. However, because the internship is now required and not an option, the number of students participating will increase. Therefore, both faculty and students will need to ensure a steady focus on legal and ethical principles occurs across the curriculum.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Revise supervisor’s evaluation form to ensure the specific language of the SLO is included.

Measure 5.2 (Indirect)

For the first time since the department was formed two years ago, graduating seniors in Spring 2017 were surveyed on their perception of the department curriculum having taught them to understand and apply legal and ethical principles related to communication. The 10-question survey was administered through SurveyMonkey and sent to the 11 Communication graduates, of whom 7 responded for a 63.6% response rate.

Students were asked to rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the SLO 5: Overall, your communication curriculum has helped you learn to understand and apply legal and ethical principles related to communication.

Target: Ideally, 100% of students would answer 5/5.

Finding: Two of the students rated the SLO as 5/5 (strongly agree) and five rated it as 4/5 (agree), for a 100% positive student rating.

Analysis: Although the overall rating is high, ideally 100% would rate this important SLO as a 5/5.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Review curriculum with faculty to ensure legal and ethical principles are taught and reinforced throughout.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

SLO 6. Communication graduates will use current media technologies and understand their social and cultural influences.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

COMM 2020: Mass Media and Society
COMM 3260: Reporting and Writing for New Media
COMM 4700: Capstone
COMM 4910: Internship

COMM 2020: Students in COMM 2020 complete an assignment and final paper related to understanding media technologies and their potential influence on society and culture.

Assignment: Having technology at our fingertips allows us to access information any time, any place. Yet students use technology more for social communication. This assignment challenged students to reflect on this use. Learner outcomes include: (1) writing and communication skills; (2) depth of consideration regarding using technology as a personal issue; and (3) reflection on technology as a tool for research and not as a social necessity.

Assignment: Could you live without social media for one week?

So, I'm curious. I have several questions related to your use of social media: (1) could you/would you go on a social media diet or ban it for brief periods; (2) how have social media improved your life or studies; and (3) are there any specific negatives or concerns about social media use for close friends or family? Read the article below first. <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2011/10/28/imagining-college-life-without-social-media>

Final Paper: Students were required to write a final paper on one of the following topics:

1. Objectivity in reporting, print or electronic, can it be accomplished? If so, how?
2. Ratings and their impact on television and radio, how important are they?
3. Will social media replace traditional forms of mass communication, how and why?
4. The influence of violence in television, film and video games on adolescent behavior.
5. Does mass media such as television, social media, radio, and film ads influence a consumer to purchase products and services? Give examples of how each listed may influence (purchasing) behavior.
6. If you have another interest, convince me of a topic you'd like to explore. I must approve it first.

Learner outcomes include: (1) writing and communication skills; (2) clearly stating and defining the thesis of the paper; (3) providing support for the thesis using references; and (4) following guidelines regarding the length and format.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

Target: 70% of possible points

Finding:

Fall 2016: Assignment average score = 14.74/20 pts or 73.75%; final paper average score = 91.85/100.

Spring 2017: Assignment average score 17.47/20 pts or 87.35%; final paper average score = 91.5/100 pts

Analysis: As a professor, I have noted in classes that some students cannot seem to control the urge to constantly check social media. The ease of plagiarism and cheating on online tests is tempting and for some "commonplace." Of course, social media, as do all technologies, have many positives and negatives.

In the assignments submitted, students appeared to be honest regarding their use of social media. The majority noted they were addicted to it and couldn't live without it, for even a day. Several suggested they could attempt to do without social media for up to a week but no more. They also said they hadn't thought about nor tried to refrain from using social media. Therefore, they simply didn't know what the impact would be. Only a few noted they could not only limit access to social media but could walk away completely. In virtually every case, all students noted this was not an issue of using technology to access information but simply a way of life to them. They did note that using technology and social media had potentially harmful outcomes since it was easy to access and use protected information.

Action - Decision or Recommendation

Instructor will monitor students' inappropriate use of social media during class and help them understand that social media can be an appropriate tool for communication professionals when used appropriately. He will also emphasize legal and ethical issues that arise with social media usage.

COMM 3260: Required of all majors, the prerequisite for this course is COMM 2510. A grade of "C" or higher is required. To assess students' abilities to use current media technologies correctly and effectively, students are required to answer 10 multiple choice questions designed to test their understanding of current media technologies in addition to demonstrating implementation of a mini-campaign strategy. Both assessments take place at the end of the semester.

Target: 80% of possible points

Finding: Students scored an average of 92.5% on the multiple choice portion of the assessment. Students earned an average score of 76% on the content calendar (strategic implementation) component of the assessment.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

Analysis: While students are familiar with social media channels for their personal use, very few entered the classroom understanding the amount of strategy that is required to host an effective social media presence in addition to being quite unaware of the resources available to make the process of becoming efficient and effective much easier. Students struggled to identify stories that would be considered newsworthy and tended to write as though they were advertising or pitching something rather than focusing on writing in a clear, concise, fact-based fashion.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The instructor recommends that this class continue to serve as a requirement for any student pursuing a degree from the Department of New Media, Journalism and Communication Arts. Additionally, it will be imperative for this class to evolve with the ever-changing new media industry. Students must be prepared to present their messaging across a diverse array of channels in order to be effective and successful in a professional setting.

COMM 4700: As a hybrid course using the Moodle delivery platform, students were required to use Internet technologies to complete and post assignments. Class discussion and guest speakers also discussed current technologies and, especially, the role of new media and social media in today's communication industry. However, the specific language of this SLO was not incorporated into student assessments.

Target: 80% of possible points

Finding:

Spring 2017: No specific assessment was incorporated that included scoring or a rubric to assess this SLO.

Analysis: Students participating in this class were required to use computer and Internet technologies to complete and post assignments.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Revise a student assignment assessment to ensure the specific language of the SLO is included.

COMM 4910: Internship supervisors evaluated students on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent): Student can use appropriate technologies expected of those seeking a first job in communication, journalism, or mass communication.

Target: Four out of five possible points (4/5).

Finding:

Fall 2016: Two students received a score of 5, and one student a score of 4, with an average of 4.6 or "good."

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

Spring 2017: All four students evaluated received a score of 5, or excellent.

Analysis: Students participating in internships met their supervisor's expectations for this SLO. However, because the internship is now required and not an option, the number of students participating will increase. Therefore, both faculty and students will need to ensure a steady focus on familiarity with current technologies occurs across the curriculum.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Revise supervisor's evaluation form to ensure the specific language of the SLO is included.

Measure 6.2 (Indirect)

For the first time since the department was formed two years ago, graduating seniors in Spring 2017 were surveyed on their perception of the department curriculum having taught them to understand and apply legal and ethical principles related to communication. The 10-question survey was administered through SurveyMonkey and sent to the 11 Communication graduates, of whom 7 responded for a 63.6% response rate.

Students were asked to rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the SLO 6: Overall, your communication curriculum has helped you learn to use current media technologies and understand their social and cultural influences.

Target: Ideally, 100% of students would answer 5/5.

Finding: Three of the students rated the SLO as 5/5 (strongly agree), three rated it as 4/5 (agree), and one rated it 2/5 (disagree), for an 85.72% positive student rating.

Analysis: Although the overall rating is high, ideally 100% would rate this important SLO as a 5/5.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Review curriculum with faculty to ensure the curriculum is continually refreshed to incorporate new media technologies.