Objectives

Writing in the public interest can be accomplished in a variety of medium and genres. It would be impossible for any one class to teach you how to write every genre in every medium that is in use today. The goal of this course, then, is to equip you with rhetorical skills (those intellectual, analytical, and persuasive skills) that help you learn to write in the public interest no matter what the setting, exigency, and audience. You’ll need these skills because organizations, communities, and non-profits often ask their professional writers to be versatile writers, learners, and producers of all kinds of deliverables.

To achieve this overall objective of learning how to learn we’ll scaffold the tasks. First, we’ll survey genres of public writing considering what we know about how these work, for whom and why. Second, we’ll consider methods for learning about the capacities and needs of an organization. Third, we’ll bring the former two skills into our next task: writing a proposal or mock up of the types of writing needed for the organization; and finally, we’ll bring together the whole and produce drafts of the deliverables and assessment measures for their success.

From these tasks, you should leave this class able to:

- Study how genres of writing work according to modes, audiences, purposes, exigencies, and cultural contexts.
- Collect streams of data and analyze these to help you represent the capacities and needs of an organization, group, or community.
- Create a proposal for the research and writing you can do for this organization.
- Create the deliverables in a range of media that will a) help you understand how delivery and circulation are impacted by various media, b) produce portfolio-ready work; c) provide the organization with the deliverables; and d) develop an assessment measure of your deliverables for all to gauge their success.

Readings

A selection of essays will be placed on our class website. Please purchase this text online before the semester begins.


Assignments

In addition to these brief descriptions, full length descriptions will be provided on our class website.

Genre Assessment

As part of your research within the community organization you’ve chosen to work with, you’ll analyze their websites, informational materials, and other artifacts from the organization to better understand the ways in which this community organization reaches its audience through their choices of modes, audiences, purposes, and exigencies. This assignment gets us thinking about the organization from an etic perspective, trying to understand how it works from its artifacts.
Capacity Needs Assessment
With a better understanding of the kinds of artifacts produced by the organization, you’ll dig deeper into the history, organizational structure, activities, values, capacities and needs that surround the genres produced by the organization. This process begins your fieldwork within the organization, trying to understand its culture from an emic perspective. The capacity needs assessment paper will offer an overview of the organization, synthesis of your fieldwork, and compilation of your data collection. This research report will lead to the proposal for the work you will do for and with the organization, showing what you’ve learned about the organization and providing a contract for the writing you will do in their public’s interest.

Proposal
Short proposal of 2-3 pages describing the MAPSC for the deliverables. This will be developed from the capacity needs assessment.

Final Portfolios
These deliverables be proposed to the organization and once accepted will become the basis for the bulk of the writing you will do for the semester. The goal is to develop these deliverables in many media, paying attention to how remediation impacts the information carried and received, and also paying attention to the capacities of the organization. For instance, you don’t want to create a complex style sheet that won’t be transferable for the organization, unless of course, they ask for a style sheet and a tutorial for how to maintain it. Since no two deliverables will be the same, and since your proposal will outline the criteria for what makes a successful piece of public writing, the grading rubric for the deliverables will be developed by us once the proposal is accepted by the community organization.

More details on each assignment will be made available at our course website: http://www.msu.edu/~cushmane/wpi.htm

Grading of Assignments
Grade point conversions:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>GPA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>85 – 89</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 – 84</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>75 – 79</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 – 74</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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Assignment weights
- Participation: 15%
- Genre assessment paper: 15%
- Capacity-Needs Assessment: 20%
- Proposal: 10%
- Portfolios: 40%

Community Partners
Karen Casey McKnight, director of the MSU’s Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement, has drawn up for us a list of agencies that have asked for our help in developing writing that serves their public’s interests. Within the first few weeks of class, we will ask you to make contact with these community partners in small groups. The list of these organizations follows the schedule for the class.

Technology Innovation Center (ITC) – City of East Lansing
The City of East Lansing, in partnership with the Lansing Regional SmartZone, the East Lansing Downtown Development Authority and the Local Development Finance
Technology Innovation Center (ITC) – City of East Lansing, cont.’
Authority, has created the Technology Innovation Center in Downtown East Lansing to facilitate the development of the technology-based economy of the mid-Michigan region and bolster the region's professional workforce.

The three main objectives of the Technology Innovation Center are:

- Identify and support high technology business opportunities
- Promote long-term and sustainable economic development in East Lansing and the region
- Support the business community by providing affordable office space and services, training, funding sources, mentoring and a network of professional advisors


The ITC is sponsoring monthly networking events, IGNITE. A group (2-4) of MSU students is needed to utilize social networking mechanisms such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc. to promote attendance. IGNITE events are intended to serve as a hub for creative, technology related talent and opportunities in somewhat of a “speed presentations” format. The utilization of viral marketing for promotion also is desirable.

Additional opportunities exist to plan/promote for related events and to update the website.

Contact: Jeff Smith, Project Manager, jjsmith@cityofeastlansing.com
325 E. Grand River (3rd Floor, above the Barnes and Noble. Enter through the door west of Douglas J.’s. Take elevator at the rear of the building to the 3rd Floor.)
East Lansing, Michigan
Phones: 517-319-6861 office
517-420-1670 mobile

The Asset Independence Coalition (AIC)
AIC Mission: The Asset Independence Coalition coordinates resources of public and private institutions to promote the financial independence of low to moderate income residents of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties. (Note: The MSU Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program and the Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement are members of the AIC.)

The AIC is drafting a new marketing strategy that they hope to implement in January. Part of the strategy will include print materials (brochures, etc.) and a new web presence (website, YouTube videos, etc.). A student or two from an upper level writing class would be very helpful in crafting the message and developing the materials. Students could also assist in writing press releases.

Web: http://www.cacvoices.org/organizations/aic/index_html

Contact: Amanda Masters, Chair, AIC, and Associate Director, Community Investment, Capital Area United Way, a.masters@capitalareaunderway.org
1111 E. Michigan Ave. East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: (517) 203-5020

YouVote
YouVote is a joint initiative of Michigan State University focused on voter registration and information for students. Formed in 2001, YouVote was borne from the confusion and
frustration that many students experienced at local polling places with the initial implementation of the Michigan “Motor-Voter” law, (which stipulated that one’s voter registration and driver’s license address must be the same.) Partners include the City of East Lansing, the MSU offices of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Governmental Affairs, Student Life, Residence Life, the student Residence Hall Association, the Associated Students of Michigan State University, the Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, and academic service-learning classes such as WRA 135 and JM 375

Web: http://www.youvevote.msu.edu/

The YouVote website has undergone numerous revisions and additions based on interns and classes involved. It no longer has a cohesive look and “voice”. MSU students with professional writing expertise in digital environments are needed to re-do the website. Students are encouraged to “start from scratch” in terms of design, to include that of a new logo, and the revision of text (with the exception of wording deemed necessary by the Secretary of sate and/or the City Clerk).

Contact: Ginny Haas, Director, Community Relations, MSU, Office of the Vice President for Governmental Affairs, haasv@msu.edu
Office: 484 Hannah Administration Building, MSU
Phone: 353-9001

Crime Stoppers of Mid-Michigan

Crime Stoppers of Mid-Michigan, founded in 1989, is a non profit community organization that raises funds for rewards encouraging to citizen witnesses to call an anonymous tip line to solve felony crimes in the Tri-County area. Crime Stoppers is an alliance of the community, the media and law enforcement with the goal of creating a safer place to live and work by getting felons off the streets and into the judicial system. Crime Stoppers of Mid Michigan is managed by a volunteer, unpaid board of directors with law enforcement coordinators, and in cooperation with the media through WLNS, Ch. 6. Since inception in 1989, Crime Stoppers of Mid Michigan program has received over 2,100 valid tips that have lead to 300 warrants and 357 arrests. Have paid over $15,000 per year in awards to citizen witnesses and $317,385.00 in property and narcotics have been recovered.

Web: www.crimeStoppersofMidMichigan.com

Talented students are needed to assist in the implementation of recommendations in the areas of fundraising, public relations, advertising, targeted mailing, tri-fold brochure and MySpace and Facebook page design. - Orientation is done through individual or group meetings with the president of the organization. Work may involve coordination with Sheri Jones of WLNS, Ch. 6 News.
Note: Students must be willing to submit to a police background check (run through the CSLCE using the State Police ICHAT system.
Contact: Cassandra Heos, Director, Ellassy@aol.com
Phone: 881-9234
## Schedule and Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Unit</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>What’s due/ Homework</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T: 1/20 Emic/Etic perspectives TH: 1/22 Review of websites.</td>
<td>Due 1/20 Chapter 1 read pps. 1-23 &amp; 44-64 Due 1/22 Tools for Engagement modules 3 &amp; 4. And Chapter 2 (skim samples) <strong>Remember:</strong> Stop by organization, introduce yourselves, and gather additional artifacts.</td>
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<td>T: 1/27 MAPSC of artifacts gathered: workshop GA TH: 1/29 Workshop GA drafts: discuss 3.</td>
<td>Due 1/27 additional artifacts; Chapter 3 Reading the Self, Reading Cultures: Understanding Texts. (skim samples) Due 1/29 3-5 page draft of genre analysis</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Weeks 4-7: Writing in the Public Interest (WPI): Methods for Learning about Capacity &amp; Needs</td>
<td>T: 2/3 Generate what we want to know. TH: 2/5 What are capacities? T: 2/10 Fieldnotes TH: 2/12 Place/Space</td>
<td>Due 2/3 Genre Analysis Paper Due Due 2/5 &amp; Module 5 Tools for Engagement</td>
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<td>T: 2/17 Interviews &amp; Methods TH: 2/19 Methods cont’.</td>
<td>Due 2/10 Chapter 5 all (skim samples) Set time to interview and observe place. 2/12 Chapter 4 (skim samples) Homework map the space of the organization; conduct interviews/observations;</td>
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<td>T: 2/24 Present organization’s capacities and needs TH: 2/26 workshop capacity needs statement</td>
<td>Due 2/17 Community Tool Box 3 Due 2/19 Chapter 6 (skim samples) Homework: compile organization’s structure, capacities and needs</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Weeks 8-10: Writing in the Public Interest (WPI): Proposals for Deliverables</td>
<td>T: 3/3 Proposal workshop TH: 3/5 Schedule semester</td>
<td>Due 3/3 Capacity and Needs paper due Due 3/5 Proposals due in class</td>
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<td>T: 3/10 Spring Break TH: 3/12 Spring Break</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 4</strong>&lt;br&gt;Weeks 11-end: Writing in the Public Interest (WPI): Creating the Deliverables and Presentations</td>
<td>T: 3/17 Presenting proposals TH: 3/19 Presenting proposals</td>
<td>This part of the schedule will be more defined after spring break, once we have a sense of what you will write, when, and for whom. Instruction will be delivered to groups and to class overall as needed. Possible topics include: digital video creation, basic web authoring, document design with MS Word, Adobe Photoshop, and Camtasia.</td>
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<td>T: 3/24 Workshops TH: 3/26 Class cancelled</td>
<td>T: 4/7 Status updates from all groups. Problems and solutions.</td>
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<td>T: 3/31 Workshops TH: 4/2 Workshops</td>
<td>TH: 4/9 Status updates from all groups. Problems and solutions.</td>
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<td>4/7 &amp; 9: Updates</td>
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<td>T: 4/14 &amp; 16 Workshops</td>
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<td>T: 4/21 Presentations TH: 4/23 Presentations</td>
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<td>T: 4/28 Portfolios TH: 4/30 Portfolios/ Evals</td>
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Policies and Procedures

- Late work has ten points deducted for each calendar day it's overdue.

- You are allowed to miss three classes without penalty. Any class missed over those allotted results in .5 grade points deducted from your final grade. If you’ve missed 4 classes, for example, and your final grade computes to a 3.5, then your final grade will be a 3.0.

- Participation is ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings due that day. Plan on expressing your ideas, frustrations, questions, confusions, etc., even if you’re not able to articulate them without some hesitation. We make this class what it is, so we need your willingness to share what you’re learning, what makes you confused, and especially what you need to learn!

- If you are absent, you miss valuable class time with your peers and will have difficulty keeping up with the pace of the class. If you miss class, you are still responsible for obtaining class notes and completing work you missed.

- MSU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please see me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

- If you become sick, or have a family emergency, please notify me ASAP and we can make arrangements for you.