

City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Course offered by Department of Media and Communication with effect from Semester A in 2012 / 2013

Part I

Course Title:	Writing for the Media
Course Code:	COM2202
Course Duration:	1 semester
Credit Units:	3
Level:	B2
Medium of Instruction:	English [For practicum: English and Chinese (Putonghua and Cantonese)]
Medium of Assessment	English supplemented by Chinese

This course is designed to teach students communication skills in both English and Chinese to prepare them for a bilingual working environment.

Prerequisites: (<i>Course Code and Title</i>)	None
Precursors: (<i>Course Code and Title</i>)	None
Equivalent Courses: (<i>Old Course Code and Title</i>)	EN4533 Writing for the Media
Exclusive Courses: (<i>Course Code and Title</i>)	None

Part II

1. Course Aims

This course aims to

- develop students' writing abilities for a wide range of mass media channels in both English and Chinese.
- focus on developing and applying different writing skills required for each area of mass communication, such as writing for broadcast, print or new media covering a range of document types.
- examine and apply general writing principles across functional genres when writing for information, entertainment, interpretation, persuasion and promotion.
- develop students' ability to be flexible when moving from one medium to another and from one kind of writing to another for a variety of purposes.
- prepare students to take up jobs as editors, broadcasters, advertising executives, advertising copywriters, journalists, public relations executives, freelance writers, corporate affairs executives.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

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

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)
1	Analyze various kinds of media writing critically	20%
2	Discover knowledge of the general principles of media writing	20%
3	Write publishable stories for various media (specifically for broadcasting, public relations and advertising)	60%
4	Appraise the writing of English and Chinese correctly in terms of accuracy, conciseness, expression, grammar, and style	(20% of all writing assignments)

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No.	TLAs	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures: Students will <ul style="list-style-type: none">• acquire knowledge of the various genres and styles of media writing, such as news reports, press releases and advertising copies (especially news values, structure, audience awareness)	2 weeks
2	Lectures and discussions: Students will <ul style="list-style-type: none">• generate new ideas on selected topics• detect the nature and major features of various genres of media writing	2 weeks

3	<p>Writing Laboratory: Students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply the principles of good writing in writing exercises and • critique media writing in English and Chinese 	9 weeks
4	<p>Discussion and troubleshooting for the use of language: Students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate critically English and Chinese writing in terms of accuracy, conciseness, expression, grammar, and style 	Throughout the course

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities

(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CIOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course. Students are required to attend all classes. Students who miss four or more sessions will not be allowed to pass the course.)

CIO No.	Type of Assessment Tasks/Activities	Weighting (if applicable)	Remarks
1	<p>Writing a Long Paper: Students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appraise and analyse a news report • reflect on their approach to writing 	20%	
3	<p>Composing 9 Weekly writing assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print news • Broadcasting news • Public relations texts • Advertising copies 	70%	50% in Chinese
2 & 4	<p>Quizzes: Pop quizzes will be set to test knowledge and depth of understanding of general principles in Media Writing and language skills</p>	10%	

5. Grading Criteria for Writing Assignments

A — The work is well written and free of errors. It is clear, concise and interesting. It is well organized and contains effective transitions, quotations, descriptions and anecdotes. It can be published by the media.

B — The work contains only a few minor errors of style. It is written in a cohesive, well-organized manner. The work is not as detailed, descriptive or interesting as an “A” story. A media outlet could publish the story after minimal editing.

C — The work is superficial. It is too wordy and fails to clearly emphasize the latest, most interesting or most important facts. It tends to be disorganized and contains many minor errors. Some parts have to be rewritten because they are repetitious, awkward or confusing. It could be published only after extensive editing.

D — The work contains all the necessary facts, but those facts are presented so ineffectively that they would have to be rewritten before the story could be published. The work also may contain an unacceptable number of stylistic, spelling or grammatical errors.

F — The work could not be published by any media outlet and is so incomplete, confusing or erroneous that the facts in the story could not be rewritten and published.

Grading Criteria for the Use of Language (20% of each writing assignment)

Accuracy = 4 points

Conciseness = 4 points

Expression = 4 points

Grammar = 4 points

Style = 4 points

Grading of Student Achievement: Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations.

Grading pattern: Standard (A+, A, A-....F). Grading is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent:	Strong evidence of original thinking, organization and application of the principles and skills in writing for various media, as demonstrated in writing assignments and quizzes (with a total score of 90-100 weighted points). Highly innovative ideas and critical attitude towards media writing assignments.
B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good:	Evidence of grasp of subject and some evidence of critical capacity to apply the principles and skills in the production of written texts for various media, as demonstrated in writing assignments and quizzes (with a total score of 80-89 weighted points). Fairly innovative ideas and critical attitude towards media writing assignments.
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate:	Evidence of basic understanding and ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the production of written texts for various media, as demonstrated in writing assignments and quizzes (with a total score of 70-79 weighted points). Little innovative ideas and critical attitude towards media writing assignments.
D	1.0	Marginal:	Evidence of sufficient familiarity with basic principles and skills in the production of written texts for various media, as demonstrated in writing assignments and quizzes (with a total score of 60-69 weighted points). Very little innovative ideas and critical attitudes towards media writing assignments.

F	0.0	Failure:	Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills in the production of written texts for various media, as demonstrated in writing assignments and quizzes (with a total score of 59 or lower weighted points). No innovative ideas and critical attitudes towards media writing assignments.
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Part III

Keyword Syllabus

Media writing; Persuasive writing; Writing news - stories and leads; Speeches; Magazine articles; Television news writing; Writing for electronic media - radio and television; Writing for public relations and advertising.

Recommended Reading

Text(s)

Stovall, J. G. (2012). *Writing for the Mass Media* (8th ed.). Pearson.

Yopp, J. J., & McAdams, K. C. (2003). *Reaching Audiences: A Guide to Media Writing* (3rd ed.).

康文久、高紅玲 (編) (2002)。實用新聞寫作。北京市：新華出版社。

Suggested Reading

Adams, S. (2001). *Interviewing for Journalists*. London; New York: Routledge.

Arnold, G. T. (2003). *Media writer's handbook: A guide to common writing and editing problems*. Boston: McGraw-Hill. (on reserve)

Bunton, et al. (1999). *Writing Across the Media*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Gowers, E. (1986). *The Complete Plain Words*. England: Penguin. (on reserve)

Hicks, W. (1995). *English for the journalists*. London: Routledge. (on reserve)

Herbert, J. (2000). *Journalism in the digital age: theory and practice for broadcast, print and online media*. Oxford; Boston: Focal Press.

Kessler, L., & McDonald, D. (2000). *When Words Collide: A Media Writer's Guide to Grammar and Style* (5th ed.). Canada: Wadsworth. (on reserve)

Mencher, M. (2006). *Melvin Mencher's news reporting and writing*. Boston: McGraw-Hill. (on reserve)

Mencher, M. (1997). *News Reporting and Writing*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Silvester, C. (Eds.). (1994). *Interviews*. London: Penguin.

Strunk, Jr., W., & White, E. B. (1972). *The elements of style*. New York: Macmillan. (on reserve)

黃天賜 (2011) 新聞評論寫作。香港：中華書局。