

**Department:** COMM

**Course No.:** 242W

**Credits:** 3

**Title:** Government Communication

**Contact:** Ross Buck

**WQ:** W

**Catalog copy:** COMM 242W Government Communication 3 units Communication in government processes. Communication theory and practical applications. Issue management, lobbying, interest-group strategies, government relations, grassroots action, and coalition building. Students may not pass this course without passing the written work.

**W Criteria:** 1. Describe how the writing assignments will enable and enhance learning the content of the course. Describe the page requirements of the assignments and the relative weighting of the “W” component of the course for the course grade.

As in any course that has writing requirements, writing galvanizes what students learn. It gives them an opportunity to verify what they “think they know” against what other interpretations are available. They go through a process of re-assessing their thoughts and conclusions about what they believe to be valid and reasonable. In addition, the “W” course format also provides them with specific feedback with regard to their writing skills, which includes grammar, syntax, punctuation, sourcing, etc.

Students are assigned two projects in this course for a total of 20 written pages : one assignment (10 pages) is theoretically, conceptually, and analytically based. Here students grapple with the concepts and analytical constructs. In a second project (10 pages), students grapple with more practical matters of how "government speak" and "media speak" interplay. Also, students address how this manner of information dissemination influences the ideas and understandings of ordinary recipients. Specific topics are chosen from current political parlance.

Students write 2-3 three drafts for each project . Occasionally, some students can write two drafts because their writing skills are superior to what is typically expected, but two drafts are a minimum.

Feedback comes in several ways : written comments from the professor, individual conferences when needed, formal in-class instruction, and feedback from group discussion in class. In group discussion, students have an opportunity to address their strengths and shortcomings in a forum that is conducive to their overall skill enhancement.

The “W” component (the two projects) is roughly 80% of the grade . Approximately 20% accounts for sustained student participation in class discussion of topical and writing issues.

2. Modes of writing instruction include:

- a. formal instruction in class, describing, clarifying, guiding, student projects.
- b. discussion of main points and supporting arguments
- c. sourcing, e.g., footnotes, bibliography; style, grammar and syntax
- d. written commentary on the drafts
- e. oral group discussions in class
- f. individual conferences

3. Students will have ample opportunity to receive feedback for improvements on their papers before proceeding to the next draft or next assignment. They will be able to build and improve.

4. Students will be informed orally and in writing (syllabus) that they will FAIL the class if they do not pass the writing requirements.