



Mississippi College

**COMMUNICATION**

Department

# **COM 499 Senior Portfolio Handbook and Syllabus**

## **Fall 2018**

# Introduction

The Communication Department believes all undergraduates should approach graduation sure of what they have learned, prepared for their next professional or academic steps, and eager to represent the university and department in the chosen fields.

Accordingly, the COM 499 Senior Portfolio course—required of all Communication undergraduates—is designed to accomplish three goals:

## Goal 1

To provide for students an opportunity to display, in a creative and professional manner, high-quality evidence of their work, inside and outside the classroom, at Mississippi College

## Goal 2

To serve as a teaching and learning assessment tool for both students and Communication Department faculty.

## Goal 3

To provide evidence to alumni, friends, and potential employers of Communication Department graduates that the department maintains a commitment to academic and professional excellence in its offerings.

This handbook provides guidance for all Communication students as they prepare for COM 499 Senior Portfolio and enroll in the course during their final semester as an undergraduate.

Students are encouraged to refer to this handbook often during their undergraduate years and obtain a new copy each August when the course syllabus is updated. Copies can be downloaded from the department website at [communication.mc.edu/portfolio](http://communication.mc.edu/portfolio).

# Course Syllabus

## COM 499: Portfolio (1)

Fall 2018 – Tuesday (selected dates), 11:00-11:50 a.m. – Aven 109

**Instructor** Reid Vance – Aven Hall 104 – vance@mc.edu – 601.925.7785 – @reidvance

**Office Hours** MWF, 8:00-9:00 a.m.; MW, 11:00-1:30 p.m.; M, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

**Catalog Course Description:** This course is designed to prepare the student to present a portfolio of his/her work to a panel of departmental instructors and working professionals. The student must register for the course during the last semester of their senior year. This course is to be completed during the semester of graduation.

**Prerequisite:** Senior standing

### Student Learning Objectives:

- Produce print and digital presentations of academic and extracurricular elements of the undergraduate experience.
- Display proficiency in the student's selected academic concentration.
- Display organizational and interview skills necessary for professional environments.
- Produce a professional resume and references for use in future professional endeavors.

**Course Content:** Students will produce print and digital portfolios of their work as a Communication student at Mississippi College. The portfolio will include assignments that meet Communication core-specific, concentration-specific, and internship-related objectives. Students must also include in their portfolio an introductory letter, up-to-date resume, listing of all college courses taken, letters of reference, and documentation of extracurricular and service activities.

**Grading Scale:** Students must complete all assignments as required to receive a passing grade. Portfolios deemed unacceptable must be adjusted and amended as needed. Each Communication faculty member will evaluate each student's portfolio, paying careful attention to the portions relevant to the faculty member's field of teaching and expertise. Each faculty member's evaluation will be considered as to whether or not the student passes the course. **All Communication majors must pass this course to graduate.**

**This syllabus is subject to change at any time at the discretion of the instructor.**

# Portfolio Contents

The following items must be included, in this order:

- Introductory Letter (see sample elsewhere in this handbook)
- Resume (one page only, front and back – vetted by the Office of Career Services – see sample elsewhere in this handbook)
- Letters of Reference (minimum three required)
  - Communication faculty (1)
  - Professional reference (1)
  - Faculty (from any department) or professional reference (1)
- Listing of Communication and Minor Courses Taken (course name only – do not list course numbers, term or year taken, or grade received)
- Academic Coursework
  - Communication core
  - Communication concentration
  - Academic minor
  - Other academic work
- Internships
  - Recommendation letter from on-site supervisor
  - Examples of work from internships
- Extracurricular and Service Activities (artefactual evidence of relevant extracurricular or service activities)

The binder selected must have a slip for a cover or must otherwise provide for the student's identification.

Individual sheets of paper should be inserted into sheet protectors (maximum two sheets per protector, front and back). Sheets should not be stapled or paper-clipped.

Sections should be divided by tabs that protrude from the paper edge. Tabs should be labeled (but not with handwriting).

# Required Assignments

All students must include certain assignments completed as part of their Communication core classwork. Other required assignments vary according to concentration. Students should follow these guidelines when including assignments in their portfolios:

- Students should include both paper and digital copies of all assignments (unless otherwise noted below). Instructions for compiling the digital portfolio are found elsewhere in this handbook.
- Students are strongly encouraged to save print and digital copies of all their course work during their undergraduate education at Mississippi College. The list of required assignments is subject to change from year to year. Students who reach their senior year to find they have some required assignments missing from the personal files will be required to produce duplicate assignments.
- Students should not include copies of assignments that have been marked up by professors. Only clean copies should be included. Students are advised to make corrections to assignments previously submitted or grading before including them in the portfolio.

## Communication Core

The following Communication Core assignments are required of all students.

### **Objective**

The Mississippi College Communication Department seeks to develop in the student an overall awareness of the communication field through exposure to course work in the areas of communication law, interpersonal and public communication, journalism, mass media, public relations, and sports media.

### **Required Assignments**

- One research paper previously submitted for either COM 338 Mass Media Survey or COM 442 Communication Law.
- One news story of at least 500 words written in appropriate journalistic style. The story should:
  - have an effective lead
  - have short, concise sentences
  - have strong verbs
  - have active voice
  - have sufficient interviews and research
  - have proper attribution
  - have clarity
  - have accuracy in quotations and information
  - deliver what it promised in the lead
  - observe Associated Press style
- One public speech, prepared and delivered by the student. Students who took public speaking at another institution must record another speech. This includes:
  - one digital video copy of the speech and presentation slides (digital only)

- one copy of the speech outline
- presentation slides used in delivery (six slides per printed page)
- Evidence from internship

*Students will also include the following items based on concentration:*

### **Interpersonal and Public Communication**

#### **Objectives**

- The student will demonstrate the ability to research, organize, and deliver a public speech.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to write and present a prima facie argumentative case.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to research, prepare, and deliver small group presentations and lead small group meetings.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to plan and conduct an effective negotiation.
- The student will demonstrate a basic understanding of public relations.

#### **Required Assignments**

- A full sentence speech outline that meets the rules of good outlines (completeness, coordination, discreteness, division, simplicity, subordination, and symbolization). This speech can be the same speech submitted as part of the Core assignments. Students who took public speaking at another institution must record another speech.
- PowerPoint (or other slideware) slides from a 300- or 400-level class presentation (six slides per printed page). The presentation should demonstrate the following characteristics: appropriate font size (large enough to read), simple font style (easy to read), consistent symbols and arrangement, complimentary but contrasting choices.
- A copy of the Listening Competence Assessment and the HURIER Listening Assessment Instrument.
- A copy of a public presentation in COM 301.
- A copy of an original research paper from one of the following classes: COM 301, COM 401, COM 403, COM 443, or COM 449.

### **Journalism Concentration**

#### **Objectives**

- The student will display writing characterized by clarity, accuracy, and proper journalistic style.
- The student will be able to interview subjects and research material.
- The student will be able to write a magazine-length article that will hold the reader's attention.
- The student will be able to shoot, develop, and print black and white photographs that properly demonstrate the rule of thirds, focus, and aperture/shutter speeds.

#### **Required Assignments**

- Five news stories from *The Collegian* that demonstrate the student's mastery of: effective

leads, short and concise sentences, strong verbs, active voice, sufficient interviews and research, proper attribution, clarity, accuracy in quotations and information, delivering what the story promised in the lead, and observation of Associated Press style.

- Two writing examples from journalism internships.
- One magazine story with a cover letter. The article should demonstrate mastery of writing an effective lead, holding the reader's attention over a sustained period of time, and in-depth research and interviewing.
- One photo essay including six photographs (two photos per printed page) on a particular theme. The photographs should demonstrate the student's ability to compose using the rule of thirds and focus, and produce photojournalism with a subject pertinent to an issue or topic, consisting of natural (non-staged) subjects, and appropriate cut lines/captions.
- One in-depth news story consisting of at least three double-space typed pages.

### **Mass Media Concentration**

#### **Objectives**

- The student will display an understanding of the basic function of the legal system as it applies to the mass media practitioner.
- The student will possess the skill necessary to write in various forms such as media stories, research presentations, and creative and imaginative works.
- The student will display production skills in radio, television, and film.

#### **Required Assignments**

- One completed television hard news or feature package, with accompanying script, that reflects audience and demographic analysis and consists of an interview, intro, sound bites, voice-overs, b-roll, and outro. (Video should be posted to digital portfolio. Script should be posted to digital portfolio and included in print portfolio.)
- One condensed version of any television/video production, such as the Academic Competition, with your name on the credit roll. (Group projects of broadcast quality may be submitted. The student's role in the project must be clearly identified and substantive. Evidence of production credit must be presented.)
- Two broadcast-quality, exactly timed radio advertising spots: one 30-second spot and one 60-second spot. Each spot must include copy with production details. (Spots should be posted to digital portfolio. Copy should be posted to digital portfolio and included in print portfolio.)

### **Public Relations Concentration**

#### **Objectives**

- The student will be able to plan a public relations campaign.
- The student will demonstrate news release writing skills.
- The student will display radio and television script writing and production skills.
- The student will demonstrate ability to use social media in a public relations campaign.

#### **Required Assignments**

- One public relations plan for an organization, or a case study, that includes:

- research necessary to build a profile of an organization.
- research necessary to identify publics.
- strategic goals.
- achievable objectives.
- timetable for achieving goals.
- evaluation process.
- news release.
- use of social media.

## **Sports Media Concentration**

### **Objectives**

- The student will be able to produce, in correct journalistic style, accurate and compelling written accounts of sporting events and profiles of sports figures that include interviews of subjects.
- The student will be able to produce digital photographs and video that accurately communicate facts surrounding a sporting event or sports story.
- The student will display an understanding of the work of the public relations professional in collegiate and professional sports settings.
- The student will demonstrate a level of skill and comfort in describing sporting event action that can serve as the foundation for future work in the sports broadcasting industry.

### **Required Assignments**

- One written game story of at least 300 words.
- One written sports profile of at least 600 words.
- A set of 8-12 color photos taken during one sporting event with appropriate captions in AP style (digital only).
- One video package providing a game summary. The package must include game highlights and voice over (stand-up optional) (digital only).
- One video feature of profile of a sports figure (digital only).
- One representative sample of sports public relations work (e.g., game notes, digital media guide section, web pages, promotional piece).



# Guide to Digital Portfolio Creation

The digital portfolio will often be the first point of contact between the college graduate and a potential employer or graduate school admission officer. The digital portfolio—like the printed version—should be well-designed and easily accessible.

Students may design their online portfolios in a variety of ways using any one or combination of any number of applications. A recommended list is below. Students are not required to pay for the creation of their digital portfolio – “free” sites are acceptable. Digital portfolios should not, however, include advertising of any kind.

The digital portfolio should have a simple, professional, and easily, vocally repeatable address. The student’s name must be included. Do not include numbers in the address.

## *Good Addresses*

michaelscott.wordpress.com  
dwightkschrute.wixsite.com  
weebly.com/pambeeslyhalpert

## *Bad Addresses*

bigmike18503.wordpress.com  
dwightgoestomordor.wixsite.com  
weebly.com/pampam

Multiple apps can be used to host material, but all material for the portfolio must be embedded or linked in the student’s main digital portfolio. For example, a student’s video project may be hosted on YouTube, but the video must be embedded or linked on the digital portfolio site (e.g., WordPress or Wix). Documents can be uploaded to most digital portfolio apps. Documents should be uploaded as PDF files to ensure proper viewing.

Students are encouraged to provide links to their email addresses and relevant social media accounts in their digital portfolios. Students are strongly encouraged to ensure that their social media accounts reflect a level of sophistication that is equally personal, positive, and professional.

## **Recommended Digital Portfolio Apps**

Adobe Portfolio  
Adobe Spark  
DropBox  
Google Drive  
Medium  
SoundCloud

SquareSpace  
Vimeo  
Weebly  
Wix  
WordPress  
YouTube

## **Recent Samples**

Jesse Bingham (‘18) - <https://jessebingham61896.wixsite.com/portfolio>  
Anne Hackbarth (‘18) - <https://anniehackbarth.wixsite.com/portfolio>  
Abby Holcombe (‘18) - <https://asholcombe.wixsite.com/abby>

# Resume

The portfolio must include an up-to-date resume. The resume must be one page only, front and back. Students must have resumes vetted by the Office of Career Services prior to inclusion in the portfolio. The form included elsewhere in this handbook must be returned to the course instructor prior to final portfolio submission.

In addition to including a printed copy of the resume in the portfolio, students must also save a digital copy (as a PDF) for inclusion in the digital portfolio.

The Office of Career Services offers helpful assistance to all Mississippi College students. The Communication Department strongly encourages students to make use these services.

## **Resume Creation Tips**

### **Get Started**

- Create an inventory of your accomplishments. Include education, volunteer experience, jobs, projects, sports, organizational activities, computer skills, special training, and leadership positions.
- Analyze the job description. Address the specific qualifications desired. Identify key words and necessary skills.

### **Format**

- Start with a blank document. Do not use resume templates included in word processing software or online.
- Limit to one page. Set margins at .75" or 1.0" all around. Set paragraph spacing to single space.
- Use font size 11 pt or 12 pt. Use one, easy-to-read font such as Times New Roman, Garamond, or Calibri.
- Avoid graphics, color blocks, and multiple fonts. Make sure your resume can be easily scanned.
- Include your name, address, phone, and professional email address at the top of the page. Align at left or center.
- Ensure section headings are clearly identifiable, emphasized (bold and/or all caps), and in alignment on the page

### **Objective or Summary**

- Optional. Do not include both an objective and a summary section.
- Objective: Clearly state your career expectations (job title or job type) and your ability to contribute to the employer.
- Summary: List 3-5 statements which draw attention to your key qualifications and accomplishments. Include specific computer proficiencies and language skills.

**Education**

- Include school name, location (city, state), full degree title, and graduation date or expected graduation date.
- List most recent degree first. Include the degree you are currently pursuing at Mississippi College.
- Do not include high school information after your freshman year.
- Include GPA if 3.0 or above

**Experience**

- Include company name, location (city, state), job title, dates employed (month year), and 3-5 bulleted action statements.
- List in reverse chronological order (most recent experience first).
- Begin each description with an action verb. Describe past experiences in past tense.
- Write in telegraphic style, not full sentences. Do not use “I,” “me,” or “my.”
- Use clear and concise phrases, not vague passive descriptions.
- Focus on specific and quantifiable results of your work, significant achievements, and recognitions received.

**Honors and Activities**

- List awards and academic honors received from an employer, organization, or school. Include dates received.
- List extracurricular activities and volunteer work during the last four years. Include title (if any) and dates.
- Include leadership positions held in student government, social organizations, academic clubs, and other activities

**Make It Happen**

- Double check for grammar and spelling errors. Review for consistency.
- Make sure there are no misrepresentations and you have authored an authentic resume.
- Schedule an appointment with a Career Services professional for review or additional assistance.
- Print on high quality resume paper and save as a .pdf if submitting electronically.

(Courtesy: Mississippi College Office of Career Services)

## **Letters of Reference**

Students must include a minimum of three letters of reference in the portfolio. Letters must be typed and dated on organizational letterhead. Each letter must fit on the front side of one page of paper.

One of the letters must be from a Communication Department faculty member, and a second must be from a professional reference (on- or off-campus work supervisor or colleague but not a fellow students or internship supervisor). A third letter must come from either a Mississippi College faculty member (from any department) or a professional reference. Additional letters may be included from pastoral, ministerial, or other character references. Reference letters from family members are not acceptable.

## Evaluations and Interviews

As part of the class, students will be required to sit for a portfolio evaluation and interview with a professional in their concentration. These individuals are chosen by the department for their professional achievement and willingness to offer constructive criticism to students. The vast majority of evaluators chosen are alumni of the department.

These evaluations and interviews will be scheduled for a Friday morning late in the semester (see the syllabus for date). This time will also be used for other important tasks such as senior exit surveys. Lunch will be provided to students at the end of the evaluations. All students are required to attend all portfolio class functions on that day, and students should make plans well in advance to attend. Students will be excused from other classes if necessary.

After professional evaluations and interviews, all department faculty will have the opportunity to review each student's portfolio and offer evaluations and comments. This process takes place in the final weeks of the semester.



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## **COM 499 Senior Portfolio Resume Submission Verification Form**

All students enrolled in COM 499 Senior Portfolio are required to include a resume in their portfolio. Students are required to have their resumes reviewed by the Mississippi College Office of Career Services. Students alone responsible for the content of their resumes.

The student below submitted a resume for review to the Office of Career Services.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date Resume Submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Career Services Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date Resume Reviewed \_\_\_\_\_

***Student: You are responsible for returning this completed form to the course instructor.***