

# Syllabus for CMST 136: Writing for the Web

Spring Quarter, 2016

Communication Studies

Bellevue College

Course Instructor: Bruce Wolcott

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**OFFICE/PHONE:** Emergencies only: Leave messages with departments

Arts and Humanities / Communication Studies (R230)  
(425) 564-2341

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment

**TEXTBOOK:**

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:**

Redish, Janice. *Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works* New York, Morgan Kaufmann 2012 (Required)  
ISBN-13: 978-0123859303 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

This textbook is available free through the Bellevue College LibraryBooks 24x7 online service. More information is available in the Get Started Module of the course Canvas website.

**PREREQUISITES**

English 101 or equivalent writing competency strongly recommended.

**REQUIRED WEB**

Access to Internet capable computer along with a Gmail account, Acrobat Reader, and current Adobe Flash Player.

**RESOURCES**

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**PLEASE NOTE:** Free subscriptions to the class tutorial resource site Lynda.com are available through the Seattle Public Library and King County Library system. Information for obtaining a Lynda.com subscription is provided on the course site.

**Required tutorials:**

- *WordPress: Essential Training*, Morten Rand-Hendriksen
- *Writing for the Web*, Chris Nodder
- *User Experience Fundamentals for Web Design*, Chris Nodder
- *Writing Articles*, Tom Geller
- *Content Marketing Fundamentals*, C.C. Chapman

**Course Description:**

**CMST 136 *Writing for the Web*** introduces the cognitive, creative, and technical tools needed to effectively create text and publish ideas for the World Wide Web. Students explore and practice styles of writing integrated with Web technologies, to communicate effectively.

**Online Components:**

*Writing for the Web* is an online class, using the Canvas course management system. All of the lecture and information content is posted on the Canvas website, and students are responsible for keeping up to date with this material and all reading assignments in preparation for online discussions, demonstrations, hands-on exercises, and other class activities.

On the CMST136 Canvas web site, students can also contact the instructor, track their grades, submit assignments, and check the calendar for classroom assignments and deadlines. Students will be responsible for tracking all updates and assignments on the class website.

Once you are enrolled in the class and the quarter has begun, you will be able to log onto the class website at <http://bellevuecollege.edu/canvas>. If you need logon assistance, check out <http://depts.bellevuecollege.edu/helpdesk/students/canvas/>

Occasionally, technical problems can block you from accessing the course site. Try switching browsers and if you still can't get onto our site, call the Help at (425) 564-HELP (4357) to troubleshoot your connection issue.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Course-related social networking tools may be introduced as needed during the quarter to enhance course collaboration.

## Course Outcomes

- Define a variety of terms associated with Web communications, including the following: blog, tweet, cloud, Web 2.0, navigation, video streaming, digital convergence, screencast, app, smartphone, PDF, transmedia, platform, open source, creative commons, video conferencing, social media, brand, IP, scannability, visual hierarchy.
- Construct a web document that demonstrates how to best organize and design written content for Web audiences.
- Analyze and evaluate the integrated use of photos, graphics, video, and text on an existing Web site from the standpoint of best information design practices.
- Create an online blog using a free online publishing application that incorporates images, links, and video, supported by a written language style appropriate to a chosen target audience.
- Develop a team-based marketing plan that incorporates a blog along with associated social networking media and various components used in Web-based campaigns

- Explain the difference between copyright and open source and how each can be used to both protect and/or selectively share creative work
- Develop written materials on the Web that can be made accessible to users with disabilities.

## **Course Schedule:**

The course Modules listed below approximately correspond to the weeks of the quarter, but are subject to modification in order to flexibly meet the scheduling requirements of this synchronous distance learning class. Consequently, this schedule may need to be adjusted or modified as the quarter progresses. Instructor may alter the course to accommodate curriculum and schedule changes, as needed.

### **Module 1: Course Introduction & History of the Word**

#### **TOPICS:**

- Class orientation, introductions and overview.
- Historical perspective.
- Introduction to the foundations of written language and contemporary forms of Web-based communication.

#### **VIEWING / READING**

- Redish, Janice. *Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works*, Introduction, Chapter 1
- PDF: History of the Word, Korolenko and Wolcott, chapter from *Digital Futurama*

#### **ACTIVITY**

- CANVAS: Complete Getting Started and Module 1 Module
- Sign up for Lynda.com – online tutorials
- Locate the *Books 24/7* free online version of the class textbook on the Bellevue College library website. (*Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works*)

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Post survey and biographical information to the Canvas Discussion area
- Complete *Getting Started* Module in Canvas
- Complete *Getting Started* Module Quiz
- Complete the Student Survey

## **Module 2: Copyright & How to Connect with a Web Audience**

### **TOPICS:**

- Copyright - How to protect your work
- Creative Commons - How to selectively share your work
- Focus on the audience - Personas and Scenarios

### **READINGS:**

- ONLINE LECTURE: Copyright Basics
- VIDEOS: View all content on the Copyright and Open Source Information page
- Redish, Chapters 1&2

### **ACTIVITY:**

- View and respond to reading and/or video assignments as specified in class

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- **Graded Discussion:** Creative Commons versus copyright - what's the difference, and what kind of copyright do you support?
- Module 2 Summary Quiz (10 points)
- Module 2 self-check (5 points)

## **Module 3: Information Design Concepts**

### **TOPICS:**

- Unique features of writing for the Web vs other media: Steve Krug, Jacob Nielsen

- Content Strategy
- Color, space, typography
- Headlines, hierarchy, scannability, interactivity, navigation, best practices
- Create basic posts: text, photo, video, quote, link

### **READINGS:**

- Redish, Chapters 3, 4
- Lynda.com – *WordPress.com: Essential Training* – Complete sections 1&2

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- **GRADED DISCUSSION:** How have digital devices affected our thinking, learning, writing - for better or worse? Reference - Brian Huston documentary - *No Time to Think*(25 points)
- **ASSIGNMENT #1:** Create a WordPress page consisting of the following posts: text post, photo post, video post, and a quote with a link. (50 points)
- Module 3 Summary Quiz(10 points)
- Module 3 self-check(5 points)

## **Module 4: Build Your Own Blog**

### **TOPICS:**

- Use an online application to create a blog regarding a topic of your own choosing
- Create a Starter Page, and plan a site structure
- Create consistent messages, media, style, and tone (UNITY) on a blog site
- Page layout – PARC design principles, logo, byline banner, color/type selection
- Site navigation – Navbar, site organization, site links

### **READINGS:**

- Lynda.com - *WordPress: Essential Training*, Sections 3,4,&5
- Redish, Chapters 5, 6, 7

**ACTIVITY:** Complete the Module 4 Review

### **ASSIGNMENT**

### **Assignment #2, Part 1 - Blog Topic and Visual Theme:**

- Select a blog article topic and submit a brief implementation proposal, including a title, content, visual theme, audience, and objectives
- Create a sample starter page on your blog including a post, image, embedded YouTube video, as well as links that aligns with your site objectives. Experiment with a writing style intended for a specific audience. (50 points)
- Module 4 Summary Quiz(10 points)
- Module 4 self-check(5 points)

## **Module 5: Content Strategy**

### **TOPICS:**

- Align your content with your communication/business/marketing goals
- Writing Strategies – Headlines, plain language, brevity, active vs. passive voice
- Article structure

### **READINGS:**

- Redish, Interlude 1 – Content strategy
- Redish, Chapters 8, 9, 10 - Content Strategy, writing for the Web, and planning
- Lynda.com – *Writing Articles*, Tom Geller

### **ACTIVITY:**

- **Graded Discussion: Post Your Blog Content Strategy.** Describe the content strategy for your current blog project (title, visual theme, target audience, writing style). Include a link to your current blog site and comment on another student blog. (25 points)

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- **Assignment #2, Part 2: Write a Web Article.** Create a 500 - 1000 word article for your blog site, following Geller's article structure from Lynda.com, on a topic appropriate to your target audience. (50 points)
- Module 5 Summary Quiz(10 points)
- Module 5 self-check(5 points)

## **Module 6: Writing Integration with Web Media**

### **TOPICS:**

- Web text integration: lists, tables, links, and illustrations
- Screencasts: Embedded online presentations using images and text
- Editing images for the Web
- Open source media resources

### **VIEWING / READING**

- Redish, Chapters 11, 12, 13 – Using lists, tables, links, and illustrations
- Lynda.com - Writing for the Web, Chris Nodder

### **ACTIVITY:**

- None assigned

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- **Assignment #2, Part 3: Screencast.** Embed a screencast consisting of images and text (audio and video are optional) on your personal blog that delivers factual content, or tells a story and reflects the overall theme and message of your site.
- Module 6 Summary Quiz (10 points)
- Module 6 self-check (5 points)

## **Module 7: Branding, Marketing, and Social Media**

### **TOPICS:**

- Transmedia, Branding, Logos, IP, Identity, writing styles
- Direct traffic to your blog site using social media tools:
- Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Tumblr, Pinterest, etc.



## READINGS:

- Lynda.com tutorial - **Content Marketing Fundamentals** - C.C. Chapman

## ACTIVITY

- **Graded Discussion: Social Media Review.** Select a social media application, research its background and uses, submit an example link, and report your findings to the class. (25 points)

## ASSIGNMENTS:

- Capstone Project Announced: Create a City Marketing website proposal and site mockup. Team assignments and topic selection. Due Week 11. (100 points)
- Module 7 Summary Quiz (10 points)
- Module 7 self-check (5 points)

## Module 8: Web Accessibility

## TOPICS:

- Adapting documents for physical handicaps and learning disabilities – issues and strategies
- Accessible web pages & PDF documents - page reader, links, headers, color scheme, image tags
- Introduction to assistive technologies

## READINGS:

Lynda.com – *WordPress.com Essential Training* – complete sections 4-8.

## ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Assignment #2, Part 4: Accessible Word Press Document & Site Summary:** Create an accessible WordPress document for sight and hearing disabilities. Summarize and document blog site learning. (50 points)
- Module 8 Summary Quiz (10 points)

- Module 8 self-check (5 points)

## **Module 9: Capstone Team Project**

### **TOPICS:**

**End of the quarter Capstone Project:** Create a city marketing website proposal and site mockup, including recommended use of social media.

### **VIEWING / READING:**

**Lynda.com** - User Experience Fundamentals for Web Design, Chris Nodder.  
This online tutorial is strongly recommended but not required.

**VIDEO: Web Writing Principles** - Review of 3 Blog Site Writing Styles

### **MODULE 9 CAPSTONE PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

- Teams will post project proposals to market their idea by creating a blog site where all team members can collaborate and contribute. The site will incorporate best practices in terms of writing style, layout, navigation, storytelling, use of language, integrated media, and recommended social media extensions. Capstone Project teams will present their ideas online, and make their promotion sites available to other students in the class.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Module 9 Summary Quiz(10 points)
- Module 9 self-check(5 points)

## **MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS**

**These are the required assignments and associated point values for the class:**

### **Sign-in Participation**

Completion of a class survey and short biography at the beginning of the quarter.  
(25 points)

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**Module Review Quiz**

Mini quizzes are assigned at the completion of every module, to review key points covered in the reading and lecture materials, each worth 10 points.

(100 points)

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**Module Self-Check**

The Self-Check evaluation form is used to give students a method for reviewing work completed during each module, each worth 5 points.

(50 Points)

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**Graded Discussions**

Four graded discussions will be completed on various topics, each worth 25 points.

(100 points)

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**Build-A-Blog graded steps**

**A)** Create three separate posts - video, image, and written text with a link included.

(50 points)

**B)** Create a starter page in a recommended online blog application which integrates text, images, embedded YouTube video, and links. Provide a content strategy for the proposed blog idea. (50 points)

**C)** 500-1000 word article based on Web writing principles.

(50 points)

**D)** Embed a screencast that tells a story, and reflects the overall theme and message of your blog.

(50 points)

**E)** Create an accessible PDF document following ADA guidelines, and install it on your blog site.

(30 points).

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**Capstone Team Project:**

1. Create a City Marketing website proposal and site mockup.  
(100 points)

**Total course grade points: 615**

**Course Policies and Procedures Overview:**

For additional information visit the

[Course Policies and Procedures Supplement Page](#)

**SYLLABUS CHANGES:**

Contents of this syllabus as well as course policies and procedures may be changed at any time during the quarter at the instructor's discretion.

**ONLINE AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

Just as in any public environment, disruptions and impoliteness are not tolerated; neither will they be tolerated within the confines of our online "classroom." Students are to show respect towards each other and their instructor, which includes respect and tolerance for each other's ideas. Any sort of disrespect will, at the very least, impact negatively on your class participation grade.

**This course adheres to the following policy guidelines:**

Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive online course behavior are violations of the student code of conduct. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: use of profanity or offensive language, language that threatens or teases others, language that is racist, homophobic, misogynistic, hateful, or otherwise offensive. In general, this includes any inappropriate communication directed toward the instructor or classmates.

**Grading:**

Course grades will be assigned based on the percentage of the total points a student receives for their Exams and Projects.

**Grading Scale: 615 Total Class Points**

**A = 572 - 615**

**A- = 554 - 571**

**B+ = 541 - 553**

**B = 510 - 540**

**B- = 492 - 509**

**C+ = 480 - 491**

**C = 449 - 479**

**C- = 431 - 448**

**D+ = 418 - 430**

**D = 369 - 417**

**F = Less than 369**

### **EXTRA CREDIT**

Students may give short presentations on course-related topics of interest. These short class presentations are each worth 5 points, with a maximum of 15 points for the quarter.

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE:**

Since this is an asynchronous online course no specific lecture attendance times are currently indicated. However, online synchronous meetings may be scheduled during the course of the quarter, via Canvas conferencing, where attendance is expected.

If you are absent for an online meeting or need to leave early, you need to let the instructor know the reason for your absence by Canvas email before the session begins.

More detail will be provided regarding online conferencing, as appropriate.

### **GRACE PERIOD for PROJECTS:**

A grace period of two days is given for some selected assignments. No assignment will be accepted after the two day grace period has expired, unless unexpected circumstances are provided to warrant an extended deadline. For more information regarding expectations for assignment writing and content, review the **Assignments and Writing** page.

### **PLAGIARISM**

This course adheres to the following policy guidelines as provided by the Office of Student Services:

"Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights,

responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Vice President of Student Services."

If you are found to have cheated or copied for any assignment or exam you will forfeit your grade for the assignment, and possibly a failing grade. Cheating includes copying other people's work, with or without their permission, and using content from a Web site, book, or other source without quoting that content or citing sources. For additional information review the **Policies And Procedures** page.

*(\*If you are accused of Cheating, Stealing Exams, and/or Plagiarism, there is a Bellevue College Discipline and Appeals Procedure (the right to due process) which you may pursue. Contact the Business Division Chair in Business Division office (A242), or the Dean of Student Services (B231A), or the Associated Student Body offices (above the Cafeteria) for information regarding the appeals process.)*

### **COURSE WITHDRAWAL:**

College policy states that students must formally withdraw from a class by the end of the seventh week of the quarter. (For assistance contact the Registration Office in B125). If a student has not withdrawn by that date, an appropriate letter grade will be assigned for the course. Students not showing up or not participating in class by the end of the second week of the quarter, will be considered as no-shows and will need to make special arrangements with the instructor to determine continuation or withdrawal from the course.

### **CLASS EVALUATION**

During the quarter, you may receive instructions on providing feedback about the class you are taking. This evaluation will only take a few moments of your time. Please ask the instructor any questions you may have about this process.

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

The project work submitted this quarter will make use of your presentation, and writing skills to assess your understanding of the class content. If you need help with your writing skills, please make use of the Writing Lab in D-204 (425-564-2400). If you have (or think you might have) a disability that will have an impact on your learning, please take the time to register with Disability Resource Center in B132 (425-564-2498) within the first week of the quarter. In that way, you can properly notify your instructor of your disability and meet to discuss its implications on your class work or attendance. For more information, visit the Student Services Information Page.

## **MEETINGS WITH THE INSTRUCTOR**

By appointment only. Contact Bruce Wolcott via Canvas or Bellevue College email: [bwolcott@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:bwolcott@bellevuecollege.edu)

Should you have concerns about any aspect of the class, I encourage you to come to me with them. If for any reason you don't feel comfortable raising your concerns with me, the usual next step would be to speak with the program chair (Katherine Oleson, [koleson@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:koleson@bellevuecollege.edu)).

You can also refer concerns about this class to the Arts and Humanities Division Dean, Maggie Harada ([maggie.harada@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:maggie.harada@bellevuecollege.edu)) or the Assistant Dean, Scott Bessho ([scott.bessho@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:scott.bessho@bellevuecollege.edu)) in the Arts and Humanities division office (R230). An additional resource for concerns you find aren't being addressed by faculty or administration is the Ombuds Office (<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/ombuds/default.html>).

## **Additional Information**

CMST 136 *Writing for the Web* is an online course. Optional on-campus sessions may be scheduled for interested students as appropriate during the quarter.

For more information contact your instructor, Bruce Wolcott at [bwolcott@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:bwolcott@bellevuecollege.edu) .