

## **POLM 5007: Writing in a Political Context**

**NOTE:** POLM 5007 is normally taught in two sections (A, B). While the course content (readings, lectures, assignments) is the same across both sections, specific due dates vary and are not included in this online version of the course outline. Registered students will have access to the more detailed course outlines — which will also include week-by-week assigned readings and A/V — via Brightspace.

### **I. Course description:**

This six-week (0.25 credit) course will introduce students to the art (and craft) of effective political writing. We will look at what separates passable prose from really great writing, and will put those concepts to the test in a series of practical, real-world assignments.

The course will be taught in a hybrid format that will rely heavily on self-directed learning, combined with weekly classes (in-person or via Zoom, depending on the section). In addition to the work required to complete the assignments, you can expect to read (on average) 75 pages a week for this course and spend around half an hour each week watching pre-recorded content (this will vary week to week). Though it won't be a regular part of this course, we may be joined by outside experts as guest speakers.

### **II. Preclusions**

None.

### **III. Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, successful students will have demonstrated an understanding of how to write professionally and effectively in a political context, and demonstrated their ability to:

- Reflect on their personal goals. This includes the ability to think about—and articulate—their motivations for studying political management / political writing.
- Follow through with self-directed learning to support and strengthen their skills as writers. This includes the ability to complete weekly readings and quizzes that address some of the technical aspects of writing (spelling, punctuation) that can't be covered in a six-week course.
- Produce written products that are well written, properly formatted, and delivered on time. This includes the ability to create compelling first drafts; a willingness to work with

peer feedback to produce final, polished documents; and a proven ability to meet formatting expectations and submission deadlines.

- Act in a supportive and professional manner. This includes the ability to provide constructive and meaningful feedback on others students' written work, and a demonstrated commitment to meeting all the deadlines laid out in this course outline.

#### IV. Texts:

- Garner, B.A., & Wallace, D. F. (2013). *Quack This Way: David Foster Wallace & Bryan A. Garner Talk Language and Writing*. Dallas, Texas: RosePen Books. (est. \$18.95 in paperback)
- Dreyer, B. (2019). *Dreyer's English: An utterly correct guide to clarity and style*. New York: Random House. (est. \$36.00 in hardcover)
- McCarten, J. (2021). *The Canadian Press Stylebook: A Guide for Writers and Editors* (19th ed.). The Canadian Press. (NOTE: If you have an earlier edition, it will likely still be fine, but note that the course outline references page numbers from the 19th edition, and the 19th edition will be the "final word" in cases where editions offer different guidance.) (est. \$39.50 in paperback)
- McCarten, J. (2022). *The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling* (23rd ed.). The Canadian Press. (est. \$27.50 in paperback)
- Additional readings as assigned. (no cost; PDFs provided on course page)

#### V. Course calendar:

A range of topics will be covered in this six-week course:

Week	Topic
Week 1	Introduction to Writing in a Political Context
Week 2	How To Be A Better Writer
Week 3	Just the Facts: News Releases, Backgrounders
Week 4	Policy and Politics: Briefing Notes
Week 5	Opinion: Speeches, Op-Eds
Week 6	Messaging: Key Messages, Political Q&A

## VI. Evaluation:

A range of assignments will be used to assess student performance and progress in the course. These include:

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Reflection Letter	15%	Due before Week 2 class.
Weekly Quizzes	25%  Each short quiz is worth 5%; there are five quizzes in total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Language and Writing</li><li>• Spelling and Capitalization</li><li>• Punctuation</li><li>• Plain Language</li><li>• Frequently Confused Words</li></ul>	New quiz posted each week. Quizzes can be completed at any time during the week but are always due before the next class.
Written Assignments	60%  Each assignment is worth 15%; there are four assignments in total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• News Release</li><li>• Briefing Note</li><li>• Speech</li><li>• Key Messages / Political Q&amp;A</li></ul>	See detailed course outline and/or Brightspace for specific due dates, and for further information on how each component of the assignment (initial draft, peer review, final draft) will be assessed.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.