

SCM495: HARRINGTON SENIOR CAPSTONE

MOLLY YANITY, Ph.D.

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COURSE SITE: <http://mollyyanity.com/> and Brightspace

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit.

OFFICE HOURS IN DAVIS 206*

Wednesdays noon-4 p.m.

Thursdays 10 a.m.-noon

COURSE OVERVIEW

Nearly all that is standing between you and the commencement stage is this course.

Let's do this!

As Comm Studies and/or Sports Media & Comm majors, you should have developed **theoretical** and **practical** communication skills and knowledge in the following:

- Creating messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context (locate relevant information, select appropriate modes and tools to accomplish goals, adapting the message to the audience, present in multiple modes and contexts, adjust while communicating, and critically reflect after the event).
- Employing communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts (explain, synthesize, apply, and critique).
- Influencing public discourse (explain communication's role in civic life, identify challenges facing communities, framing issues from a communication perspective, evaluates issues, uses communication to respond to issues, advocates a course of action, and empowers individuals to promote human rights, dignity, and freedom).
- Engaging in communication inquiry (interpret, evaluate, apply, and formulate questions about communication scholarship, engage in scholarship using communication research methods, differentiate between various approaches to communication, and contribute to scholarly conversations).

- Critically analyzing messages (identify meanings in messages, articulate characteristics of messages, recognize their influence, engage in active listening, and enact mindful responding to messages).

In this senior capstone, you will produce thoughtful and reflective work to showcase your creative and scholarly abilities that you learned and developed as COMM/SMC majors. Further, you will draw from your additional academic, social and extracurricular pursuits to enhance that work, which will be displayed as professional and/or academic projects of your choosing.

A capstone course, by definition, is the culmination of what you have learned in your time in the major. As such, there are not “learning outcomes” for this class, but rather specific deliverables that are listed below.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

All readings are posted on Brightspace in the corresponding weekly folder. Students will consult additional readings for their projects and and their assigned presentations.

GRADING

Your grade will be comprised of the total score of the following:

Capstone proposal**	15%
Research evidence report^	15%
Draft #1 (plans, outlines, etc.)	5%
Draft #2 (script drafts, etc.)	10%
Final digital presentation	45%
In-person presentation	10%

COURSE POLICIES

***Attendance/engagement/participation:** This class is a mix of discussion, in-class work, readings, guest speakers, events, off-campus work and screenings. Thus, your attendance is mandatory and participation is extremely important.

I see the classroom as your “workplace” while you are in college. Thus, you should treat both your on-campus work the same way you would treat *any* work attendance.

Please discuss absences due to religious holy days and/or university sanctioned events with the professor before they take place.

Other engagement notes:

- You need to come to class *prepared*. This means you have done the reading, done any requested work, prepared questions and/or discussion points.
- You will regularly present your ideas, your opinions. You may be challenged. Respectfulness and civility are expected -- so are your voice and uniqueness.

- While in class, I expect you to be on task. If you are working on other materials, devices or engaged in activities beyond the course, you may be asked to leave the room, which will count as an absence.
- **IF YOU MISS CLASS, it is YOUR responsibility to make up work. Do not ask the professor what you missed; ask a classmate, consult the schedule, etc.**

**** Capstone proposal (15 points).** The capstone project will be based on your area of interest in the communication field. For those interested in TV production, for example, you may choose to conceptualize and produce a studio show, or a “60 Minutes”-style segment. If your interest is in writing, you will write a journalistic piece or a research paper. If you want to go into public/media relations, you may conceptualize and execute a media or social media campaign. In other words, you will produce a *professional-level artifact* that you will be able to show potential employers when you are finished.

You will write a proposal in the memo/essay form (see below) of your planned capstone project. This should be approximately 500-600 words, about two pages, double-spaced. The proposal should include the following: You are not expected to present a perfect, or final concept, but you should make sure that this proposal gives an idea of what you’re planning to do. As with any project, yours may develop and slightly change as you progress and learn more about the topic. This is a framework, not something intended to lock you in.

Abbreviated example of a proposal

TO: Professor Molly Yanity

FROM: Student

RE: Capstone project proposal

Subject: Identify the project subject/Working description (one sentence)

Scope: Explain what the project will include and what you anticipate its limitations to be. *What is your project going to be about? What is it not about?*

Need: This section begins the argument to even do the project. Even if the need is obvious, it must be stated in strong, persuasive language. *Why is this important? Who is the targeted audience? Why is it important to that specific audience? Why you are well situated to tackle this story?*

Methods: Describe the game plan for the execution of this project. *What is the best approach to this research paper or campaign? Will surveys or interviews be conducted for the piece? How will you get the information you need?*

Sources: This section will be the most robust and should be the longest. It will include an exhaustive list of several human sources with contact information, of the primary

documentation the student needs with links, research links and inquiries, as well as an assessment of the leads that may come out of those documents. It should include direct quotes from key sources. The student may also take a little latitude in this section to speculate what may be found and to what the specific sources/documents might lead.

Presentation: Here, students will determine how the project will be presented and via what medium/media. *Is this a story for the web? Will the student use a specific web host to present the digital story, or simply post it to a web host, such as SquareSpace or WordPress? Is it simply a research paper with graphs and diagrams? Is it going to be a short documentary posted to YouTube? Is it a written article? Does it need to be told over the course of a series? If so, how will it be broken up? How will the student accent the project with photos, videos, audio clips, graphics and/or other multimedia? If it is a research project, what all will be involved? If it is a presentation, what will be the supplementary information and how will that work?*

Potential Hurdles: Students identify potential problems in the research, producing and/or presentation of the project and begin to troubleshoot ways to overcome those problems.

^Research evidence report (15 points)

Write a 800-900-word, about three pages, double-spaced, report on the sources you found for your project. The report should include:

- A list of about 20 sources relevant to your project (books, popular articles, academic articles, online sources, people) – about a page
- Brief annotations for the six (6) most important sources: provide an overview of their content, relevancy and how they relate to the project – about a page
- An appendix with the first page of each of the six annotated sources

CONTACTING PROFESSOR YANITY

Reach me via email (molly.yanity@uri.edu) or via [Starfish](#) or Brightspace.

I'll respond within 24 hours on weekdays, although I'll usually get back to you sooner. I routinely send out emails and may post announcements via Brightspace, so be sure to check your URI email and/or Brightspace regularly.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Familiarize yourself with URI's on [academic honesty](#) as outlined in the [University Manual](#).

In addition to the university's policy, my stance on the use of **artificial intelligence/ChatGPT** is this: Your work is expected to be original and produced by you – which is the standard in the sport media and communication industry. That said, we will

discuss how AI may serve as a tool for your use, given that the product is fully original, vetted, fact-checked and accurate.

SYLLABUS REVISION DISCLAIMER

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus, class schedule or assignment guidelines at any point during the semester if I deem changes are necessary. I will inform you of any changes in class, via email and on the course website in a timely fashion.

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Writing Center](#) Room 009, basement, Roosevelt Hall
- [Academic Enhancement Center](#) Fourth floor, Roosevelt Hall
- [Disability, Access & Inclusion](#) Room 302, Memorial Union
- [Hardship Assistance/Rhody Outpost](#) (food insecurity, housing insecurity – there is help)

Course Schedule and all reading will be available on Brightspace, as well as mollyyanity.com.