Once Upon a Time: Course Development as Storytelling
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The Story

- GEB3219 (writing + speaking)
- 4 credits
- Fully online
- Goals = engaging content, relevant assignments, and practical application
The Prologue

- Offered each summer since 2005
- Previously taken by students without much enthusiasm
- Student enrollment ~225 students, with 12 sections capped at 13-20 students (depending on whether they meet a 4000- or 6000-word writing requirement)
The Cast of Characters

- **Protagonist:** instructor with practically-minded goals who is willing to rethink the story of writing and speaking
- **Antagonist:** students’ fear of writing and speaking, standardized curriculum in communication courses, university writing requirements, and LMS constraints
- **Supporting Roles:** 12 communication coaches (adventurous, innovative, speedy graders, responsive), think-tank participants, and supporting characters
- **Publication Crew:** video team and instructional designers
Protagonist(s)

- First thought: instructor!
- Actuality: instructor + course goal
  - Instructor/Student commitment
  - Student learning
Antagonist(s)

- Students’ fear of writing and speaking
- Standardized curriculum in communication courses
- University writing requirements
- Budgetary and LMS constraints
Supporting Roles

- 12 communication coaches
  - Adventurous, innovative, speedy graders, responsive, passionate

- Think-tank participants
  - Other communication faculty
  - Vendors willing to brainstorm
Publication Crew

- Video team & resources
  - Field shoots
  - Active Learning Studio
  - HD Studio
  - DIY Studio
  - Zoom, Adobe Spark, Camtasia

- Instructional designers
  - Comprehensive and continuous
Course Development is a lot like Reality.
YOUR PLAN

REALITY
Storytelling and the Story Arc
Exposition

Defined as: background, setting, context, framing

- **Background:**
  - Syllabus (clear but conversational)

- **Setting:**
  - Course site design (fully online course)
  - Start Here page

- **Context:**
  - “Course Expectations” video
  - Instructor and Communication Coach intro videos

- **Framing:**
  - Explanation of the value of and rationale for the course
Welcome to GEB3219 Writing & Speaking in Business! Get ready for a fast-paced, exciting course on communication. Communication skills are some of the most valuable skills you will learn as a student, and often the most sought after skills by recruiters and interviewers. I love teaching this class because we learn concepts and practical applications that help you succeed in literally any area, field, job, life event, etc. Everything you learn in this class will be useful. So get ready, get excited, and look forward to how much you will learn this summer! --Dr. Meg

Below are the objectives and outcomes for GEB3219:

In business, communication needs to be clear and convincing, so, you must be an effective writer and speaker if you wish to succeed. We've designed GEB3219 Writing & Speaking in Business to teach you the communication fundamentals to prepare you to:

- argue persuasively when writing and speaking
- demonstrate basic presentation skills
- identify the types of writing used in business communication
- write clearly, specifically, and concisely

You will learn communication principles through assignments drawn from business situations.
Learn

This course site is divided up into one topic per each week of class. You should plan to spend time in the course site on a consistent basis. The most successful students will be those who check in regularly and keep on track with the coursework.

Each week has an overview page that guides you through its instructional content of readings, videos, discussions, assignments, etc. To get started on the course, complete the following activities:

- **Do**
  - Review the Course Syllabus and Schedule, via a link to a PDF at the top of the Course Syllabus and Schedule page. The PDF contains critical information, such as course grading policies. You will need to understand those rules to succeed in GEB3219. **Note:** This course runs by a weekly schedule organized Monday-Sunday.
  - See the Opt-In Instructions if you would like to purchase the ebook version on the textbook (value pricing).
  - Meet your Communication Coaches on the Contact Us page! And take note of how to communicate with Dr. Meg and your Communication Coach (as designated by section number).
  - Review the instructions for how to download an annotated PDF of assignment feedback. You will receive a great deal of feedback on your assignments that will help you with subsequent assignments, so be sure to complete this step after each assignment.
  - Set up your Canvas profile (including a picture) and notification settings. See the Canvas Student Guide for instructions.
  - Take the Getting Started Quiz, which covers material in the “Start Here” module, focusing on the syllabus and schedule. You must answer all questions on this quiz correctly before proceeding to the module for Week 2. You can take this quiz as many times as needed.
  - Sign up for a ProctorU account. The exam dates are not yet posted, so if you already have an account, you can wait until you hear from me about exams.
  - Review the GoReact Student Guide. This page is currently experiencing some technical difficulties. Check back at the end of the week! You won’t be using GoReact for another few weeks.
  - Capsim: you’ll here more about this software in a few weeks. Come back to this page when I announce it is time to setup your accounts. (If you’ve used Capsim before in other classes, this offering is a little bit different and much less complex.)

**Make sure you always read all info. Finn & Sadie are Dr. Meg’s new pups. You’ll need to know this info for your Getting Started quiz!**
Conflict

- Conflicts often seem overwhelming
  - Fear of writing and speaking
  - Busy student lives
  - Nontraditional student population
  - Word-count requirement
  - High need for TA (or communication coach) support

- Different perspectives highlight different conflicts
Rising Action

- Authentic videos
- Low-stakes “test” assignments worth few points
- Announcements to debrief or cue upcoming deliverables
- Discussions
- Practical and engaging assignments
Comic Relief

- *Caption This!* discussion posts and humorous videos for assignments students are nervous about.
1. Don't use your profile (no one cares about the arch of your nose, etc!):

7. Nix the artsy side glance:
2. Refrain from the quick photo with gum in your mouth.

8. Don't use awkward action shots (or any action shots at all):
Elevator Pitch Fail
Peak Learning Moment

- Excursion learning assignments that enable student to create their own narrative
  - Capstone-type assignment
  - Controlled student choice of topic
  - “Real-world” observations
Falling Action

- “Repeat” assignments
- Final presentation
- Exams
Exposition
Conflict
Rising Action
Comic Relief
Peak Learning
Falling Action
Resolution
Resolution

- Final self-assessment
- Final grade
- Improved professional opportunities
The Revision

- Developing conversational syllabus to convey authenticity, clear course expectations, and student-instructor connection
- Crafting realistic assignments to gain student buy-in and teach relevant, practical business skills
- Creating community via personal details in video lectures, campus hotspots for university identity, and personalized discussion posts
- Revamping course site design to include thematic images that reinforce the concept that communication opens doors to future opportunities
The Sequel

- Improvements from Summer 2018
  - Increased sim/inbox
  - More oral comm video content
  - Yellowdig?
  - Spark as TL;DR – key takeaways or brief intros
  - How-To videos
  - Timing for Team assignments
Session Evaluations & Drawing

- Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app
- Navigate to specific session to evaluate
- Select “Evaluate Session” on session details screen (located under session type and track)
- Complete session evaluation*

*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry

Five (5) $25 gift cards will be awarded to five (5) individuals
Must submit evals using the OLC Conferences mobile app or website
Presenters

- **Sarah Bleakney** sarah.bleakney@warrington.ufl.edu
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