

## 1. Course Basics

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Freelancing  
MDIA 444 Section 1  
CRN: 44733  
SPRING 2026  
T/R 1230 – 1345  
LB 125

## 2. Instructor Information

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Sonny Wingler  
Senior Lecturer: Dept. of Media  
Ball State University, Muncie, IN  
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Office Hours: M/W 1000 – 1100, T/R 1400 – 1500, or By Appointment (<https://calendly.com/pawingler/office-hours>)

## 3. Course Information

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### Course Description

Learn the best ways to build your business and your brand. This course will guide you in managing a freelance career and learning skills in building a business presence, contract negotiation, budgeting, and paying your taxes.

### Prerequisites

MDIA 101 or TCOM 101 or JOUR 101 and MDIA 204 or TCOM 204 and MDIA 206 or TCOM 206 and MDIA 207 or TCOM 207 and MDIA 284 or TCOM 284; Senior standing. Open only to approved Media or Telecommunications majors and minors and Journalism majors and minors with permission.

### Course Modality/Structure

This course meets in person twice per week. Any changes in schedule or location will be communicated through the Canvas course site. Withdrawals deadline is March 19<sup>th</sup>.

## Course Objectives

***By the end of the semester Everyone in this course will:***

1. Be able to clearly articulate their business and have a plan for establishing it and making it profitable.
2. Articulate areas of management challenges like budgeting, contracts, clients, expenses related to production, time management, defining 'freelance', and knowing what profit margin truly means.
3. Understand the basics of networking and marketing and know how to properly promote themselves and their business.

### **Professional Competencies:**

Our course objectives are designed to help you achieve professional competencies that will help you build marketable skills. The National Association of Colleges and Employers has developed a set of competencies that is most desired by employers. The below chart summarizes how our course assignments support our course objectives which, in turn, help you achieve these professional competencies:

Assignments	Objectives	Professional Competencies
List of Questions - 50pts	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career and Self Development: Display curiosity; seek out opportunities to learn.</li> </ul>
Mission Statement - 100pts	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career and Self Development: Professionally advocate for oneself and others.</li> <li>• Career and Self Development: Develop plans and goals for one's future career.</li> </ul>
Resume/Credit List – 100pts	1,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication: Understand the importance of and demonstrate verbal, written, and non-verbal/body language, abilities.</li> <li>• Career and Self Development: Professionally advocate for oneself and others.</li> </ul>
Rate Card - 100pts	1,2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionalism: Be present and prepared.</li> </ul>
Sample Budget – 100pts	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionalism: Be present and prepared.</li> </ul>
Website/Reel - 100pts	1,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication: Understand the importance of and demonstrate verbal, written, and non-verbal/body language, abilities.</li> <li>• Career and Self Development: Professionally advocate for oneself and others.</li> </ul>
Career Analysis Research – 200pts	1,2,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career and Self Development: Show an awareness of own strengths and areas for development.</li> <li>• Career and Self Development: Display curiosity; seek out opportunities to learn.</li> <li>• Critical Thinking: Gather and analyze information from a diverse set of sources and individuals to fully understand a problem.</li> </ul>
Business Plan - 250pts	1,2,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career and Self Development: Develop plans and goals for one's future career.</li> <li>• Career and Self Development: Show an awareness of own strengths and areas for development.</li> <li>• Career and Self Development: Display curiosity; seek out opportunities to learn.</li> </ul>

## 4. Course Materials

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*None Required*

## 5. Course Assignments and Assessments

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### Course Assignments

1. List of Questions – 50 pts.
2. Mission Statement – 100 pts.
3. Resume/Credit List – 100 pts.
4. Rate Card – 100 pts.
5. Personal Budget – 100 pts.
6. Website/Reel - 100 pts.
7. Career Analysis Research – 200 pts.
8. Business Plan – 250 pts.

**Assignment details, including instructions, due dates, and grading criteria/rubrics will be posted and updated on Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly to stay informed and on track.**

### Course Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% - 94%
A-	<94% - 90%
B+	<90% - 87%
B	<87% - 84%
B-	<84% - 80%
C+	<80% - 77%
C	<77% - 74%
C-	<74% - 70%
D+	<70% - 67%
D	<67% - 64%
D-	<64% - 61%
F	<61% - 0%

## 6. MDIA 550 Addendum to MDIA 444 – Spring 2026:

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Graduate students taking MDIA 444 as a MDIA 550 course will have the following added assignment:

Interview a Professional:

Students will conduct an interview with a professional freelancer in some electronic media career. This interview will be recorded on video (Zoom or similar videoconferencing is acceptable if the subject is remote) and lightly edited for clarity.

The purpose of this interview is NOT to evaluate video/audio recording capabilities (although those elements should not be distractingly bad).

The resulting video may be made available to future sections of MDIA 444. As a result, the interview and video should focus on the freelance career of the subject. This can, and should, include elements of the subject's personal life; but remember to frame such lines of discussion through the lens of their impact on career and career's impact on personal life.

The video should aim for a finished time of 1 hour, with an acceptable range being :45 to 1:15. The tone of the interview should be conversational, so there's no expectation for silent or invisible interviewers, although students may conduct a more formal interview if they prefer. The assignment will be evaluated on length and relevance of content.

## 7. University Policies and Statements

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### University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services Office](#) coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or [dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu).

### Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's [Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), the resources on Ball State's [Freedom of Expression webpage](#), and [Ball State's Beneficence Pledge](#).

### Attendance

The Ball State University Attendance App online will document attendance. You can miss three (3) classes without any repercussions. Any missed day(s) of **attendance** beyond three (3) classes will deduct 50 points for each day absent from your final grade. If you are late to class, this counts as ½ of an absence. You will not be able to get these missed points back. Miss 10 classes and you will automatically fail the course. In short, attending class is highly encouraged.

### Extenuating Circumstances

Any extenuating circumstances that require an exemption in the attendance or late work policies **MUST** be communicated to the instructor **PRIOR** to the exemption. That is: flexibility in the attendance policy requires communicating about the absence(s) prior to the missed classes. An exemption to the late work policy must be discussed with the instructor prior to the assignment's original due date.

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## Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit [bsu.edu/titleix](https://bsu.edu/titleix) or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at [titleix@bsu.edu](mailto:titleix@bsu.edu)

**As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment.** This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

**What happens after I report?** The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant **chooses** to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

## University Grade Appeal Policy

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the [University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.](#)]

## Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's [academic integrity website](#) (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments, class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

## Generative AI Statement

### Broader Use of Generative AI Permitted/Encouraged Within Specified Guidelines

The use of Generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, is permitted in this course for students who wish to use them. You may choose to use AI tools to help brainstorm assignments or projects or to revise existing work you have written. However, you must cite any AI-generated material that informed your work. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution constitutes a violation of Ball State University's [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).]

## 8. Student Support Services

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### The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit [myballstate.bsu.edu](http://myballstate.bsu.edu) and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to [bsu.navigate.eab.com](http://bsu.navigate.eab.com).

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center.

Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit [bsu.edu/learningcenter](http://bsu.edu/learningcenter) or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: [BallStateLC](#).

### The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing.

The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to [bsu.edu/writingcenter](http://bsu.edu/writingcenter). Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

### The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the [Basic Needs Hub](#). The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a [Basic Needs Assistance Form](#).

### The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found [here](#).

### The Speaking Center

The [Speaking Center](#) is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message.

The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this [direct link](#) to sign up for a time. Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

## 9. Canvas and Student Privacy

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### Canvas Accessibility

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010.

Find more information by visiting the [Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#).

### FERPA and Privacy

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading [Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection](#).

### Video Conferencing Recording

In this class, software may be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions may be recorded. These recordings typically will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Students who prefer to listen only must disable their audio capability and visual camera. If you have concerns, please discuss these options with me.

### Plagiarism Detection

The campus subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service, through Canvas. You may need to submit written assignments to Turnitin. Student work will be used for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor that he/she refuses to participate in the plagiarism detection process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of their work.

## 10. Course Expectations and Policies

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### Course Participation Expectations

- It is recommended that you log into your Canvas course 3 to 4 times a week and check your official Ball State email account daily to view announcements and prepare for class.
- Complete all assignments, quizzes, tests, and any other activities by the stated due dates.

## Feedback Policy

- I will make every effort to respond to emails from your official Ball State email address within 24 hours during weekdays (Monday-Friday).
- I will provide feedback on projects during in-class screenings and/or as part of the grading process.
- Contact me directly if you have questions or concerns about your performance in class.

## Late Assignment Policy

- Assignments posted after the indicated due dates/times will be subject to a 10% deduction per daypart that it is late, up to a maximum deduction of 50%.
- Your work is ALWAYS worth turning in.
- Canvas will not accept assignments for grading after 11:59 pm EST/EDT on the final day of class.

## Assignment Submission Policy

- All assignments should be submitted as indicated in the assignment description.
- Assignments, unless otherwise indicated, should be submitted using the assignment link in the module.

## Grading Policy

- It is my policy that appropriate evaluation of your academic performance is an integral part of your learning experience.
- In the absence of mistakes, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence, I will be the key decision-maker on the assignment of grades.

## Engagement Expectations

To support a respectful and engaging academic community that encourages the free exchange of ideas and civil discourse, we will follow these ground rules:

- **Respect different perspectives.** Share your ideas and let others share theirs.
- **Challenge ideas, not people.** Disagree respectfully. No personal attacks or put-downs. Focus on exploring ideas critically and constructively.
- **Listen to understand.** Stay curious, ask questions to understand, and give others space to speak.
- **Assume good intentions.** Approach discussions with curiosity and compassion.
- **Keep it private.** What is shared in class stays in class. Do not share others' words or work without permission.
- **Be respectful.** Avoid hurtful language, stereotypes, or content that may demean others. Keep feedback constructive.

## 11. Course Schedule

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To support a learning experience that is responsive to the needs, interests, and pace of our class community, the course schedule may shift over the semester. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on Canvas. I encourage you to check Canvas regularly for updates and contact me if you have any questions.

## 12. Subject to Change Statement

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This syllabus is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.