

Spring 2026 Syllabus, Version 1.0, 12.12.2025

ADPR 170 A.I. in Creative Storytelling

Section: 01 CRN: 48129

Class Location: AJ 339

Meeting Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Meeting Time: 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Course Modality/Structure: The course meets in person.

A blended lecture, discussion, and laboratory format will be used.

Instructor: Dr. Johnny Sparks, Director and Professor

School of Journalism and Strategic Communication

College of Communication, Information and Media

Ball State University

Student Hours: 11 a.m. – Noon, TR;

Dr. Sparks's Office Location: AJ 300C

For appointments outside of student hours,

Please schedule via outlook.

Email: jvsparks@bsu.edu (please email, please do not message me on Canvas)

Telephone: 765-285-8278

The latest and most up-to-date version of the syllabus and course schedule will be posted on Canvas. Weekly Modules will be posted on Canvas, which will include required readings that are not in the textbook. Also, other learning resources, such as video links and recommended readings, may be included. You will be required to upload assignments in Canvas. All grades will be recorded in Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly to stay informed and on track.

I . Bulletin Description: Introduction to Artificial Intelligence tools and techniques for enhancing creativity in storytelling. Focuses on integrating Artificial Intelligence into narrative development for strategic communication. Students will learn to work in partnership with generative artificial intelligence to develop creative elements ranging from text to images, video, interactive, and social media content.

II. Student Learning Outcomes and Objectives:

ACEJMC Core Values and Competencies:

The School of Journalism and Strategic Communication identifies ADPR 170's Student Learning Objectives and NACE Workplace competencies as substantially aligning with the following Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) Core Values and Competencies/Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate:

ACEJMC Core Values and Competencies/Student Learning Outcomes	Student Learning Objectives	NACE Workplace Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conceptual Understanding and Application: Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies. 	<p>Articulate how artificial intelligence works in non-technical language.</p>	<p>Communication, Critical Thinking, and Teamwork.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ethical Understanding: Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity 	<p>Understand the moral and ethical implications of using generative artificial intelligence in commercial applications.</p>	<p>Professionalism, Career and Self-Development, Leadership, Communication, Teamwork, and Critical Thinking.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tool Competency: Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work. ● Writing: Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve. ● Visual: Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies. 	<p>Use AI-enabled tools to generate words, images, video, and other texts with purpose and accuracy.</p>	<p>Professionalism, Career and Self-Development, Leadership, Communication, Teamwork, and Critical Thinking.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tool Competency: Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work. ● Evaluative Competency: Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness. 	<p>Effectively work with AI tools as co-creative agents in the storytelling process.</p>	<p>Professionalism, Career and Self-Development, Leadership, Communication, Teamwork, and Critical Thinking.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conceptual Understanding and Application: Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies. ● Critical Thinking: Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work. 	<p>Enhanced media literacy as it relates to the impact of AI in media and society.</p>	<p>Technology, Communications, Critical Thinking and Career and Self Development.</p>

III. Required Resources: No Textbook will be required. If you bought one, please return it or add it to your collection. Readings will be provided on Canvas. Some readings are posted. Others will be posted. Please review weekly Canvas modules—weekly—for updates to required reading.

1. ChatGPT- Free Account
2. Adobe Firefly – Free for BSU students
3. Adobe InDesign – Free for BSU students

Recommended:

[Activate Your Complimentary Wall Street Journal Subscription](#)

[Activate Your Complimentary New York Times Subscription](#) (when you click create an account you'll want to then select the link at the bottom to sign in with your BSU single sign on)

IV. Course Assignments and Assessments

Assignments (30 percent of final grade)

Approximately 14 assignments will be completed during the semester. All Assignments will be posted to Canvas, where you will either enter text or upload files to complete the assignment. Some assignments are due “in class,” and others are due outside of class time; however, all assignments must be uploaded to Canvas.

To complete the assignments, you will be asked to read, write, and design both in and out of class. Some assignments will require in-class discussion and/or presentation of your work, as well as engagement with the work of others. Assignment details, including instructions, relevant readings, and submission guidelines, will be distributed in class or posted on Canvas. Assignments are designed to advance your critical and creative thinking, as well as AI, reading, writing, and presentation skills.

Assignments will be graded on a 5-point scale: (5) Excellent (A), (4) Good (B), (3) Average (C), (2) Fair (D), (1) Poor (F). Failure to complete an assignment **or** to participate in any required in-class component of an assignment will result in a score of zero **unless the absence is a university-mandated excused absence.**

Students with a university-mandated excused absence will be permitted to complete the assignment or an equivalent alternative assignment, as determined by the instructor. Make-up assignments must be completed by the deadline specified by the instructor. After all assignments and approved make-up work are graded, your three lowest assignment scores will be dropped, and an average will be calculated from the remaining scores.

Exams (50 percent of final grade)

The Mid-Term and Final Exam will each count as 25 percent of your final grade.

Project (20 percent of final grade)

Your final project will count 20 percent of your grade. Assignment details, including instructions, due date, and grading criteria/rubrics will be posted after Mid-Term and updated on Canvas, as needed. Please check Canvas regularly to stay informed about the final project.

Course Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% - 93.5%
A-	<93.49% - 89.5%
B+	<89.49% - 86.5%
B	<86.49% - 83.5%
B-	<83.49% - 79.5%
C+	<79.49% - 76.5%
C	<76.49% - 73.5%
C-	<73.49% - 69.5%
D+	<69.49% - 66.5%
D	<66.49% - 63.5%
D-	<63.49% - 59.9%
F	<59.49% - 0%

V. Course Calendar (Tuesday/Thursday)

Date	Topic Class Activities	Assigned/Recommended Materials
Week 1 Day 1: Jan 6	Syllabus, Meet and Greet Assignment No. 1: How do you use AI? (Due Jan. 7, 11:59 pm)	
Day 2: Jan 8	Assignment No. 1 (Discussion)	
Week 2 Day 3: Jan 13	What are our goals for the course? Assignment No. 2: What is AI? (Due Jan. 14, 11:59 pm)	Read: https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-ai https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-generative-ai https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-deep-learning https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-machine-learning
Day 4: Jan 15	Assignment No. 2 (Discussion)	
Week 3 Day 5: Jan 20	View in class: Big Questions about AI	

	https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/06/01/opinion/ai-technology-future.html	
Day 6: Jan 22	Assignment No. 3 (Discussion)	
Week 4 Day 7: Jan 27	AI Ethics Assignment No. 4 (Due Jan. 28, 11:59 pm)	Read: ethicaluseofai_prsa.pdf
Day 8: Jan 29	Assignment No. 4 (Discussion)	
Week 5 Day 9: Feb 3	The strategic communication process -research, objectives, strategy, execution -owned, earned, paid -professional roles	
Day 10: Feb 5	Assignment No. 5: Research and Objectives (Due in class)	
Week 6 Day 11: Feb 10	Hot topics and uses of AI in strategic communication process -productivity -creativity -delivery, etc.	Read: https://www.adweek.com/creativity/in-the-new-era-of-high-performance-creativity-ai-isnt-the-driver-its-the-engine/?utm_source=chatgpt.com Cision-PRWeek Comms Report.pdf (on canvas)
Day 12: Feb 12	Assignment No. 6: Strategy and Execution (Due in class)	
Week 7 Day 13: Feb 17	Review Day	
Day 14: Feb 19	Mid-Term Exam	
Week 8 Day 15: Feb 24	Advertising "Creative" roles, strategy, and tactics (visual, graphics, words); The Creative Brief; How to access Adobe Creative Suite; How to use InDesign	
Day 16: Feb 26	Assignment No. 7: Human-First Display Advertisement (Due on March 9, 11:59 pm)	
Spring Break		
March 3		
March 5		
Week 9 Day 17: March 10	<i>Critique/Prompting</i> Assignment No. 8: AI/Human Display Advertisement (Due March 11, 11:59 pm)	Read: https://www.averi.ai/breakdowns/the-marketer-s-guide-to-ai-prompting?utm_source=chatgpt.com
Day 18: March 12	<i>Critique</i>	
Week 10 Day 19: March 17	Assignment No. 9: AI Display Advertisement (Due in class)	
Day 20: March 19	<i>Critique</i>	
Week 11 Day 21: March 24	Public Relations Tactic: Press releases Assignment No. 10: Press Release Review (due in class)	

Day 22: March 26	Assignment No. 11: Human-First Press Release (Due April 1, 12:59 pm)	
Week 12 Day 23: March 31	Work on human-first press releases in class and discuss PR Prompting	Read: https://www.prsa.org/docs/default-source/membership/aiprompting101.pdf?sfvrsn=645d03a1_1
Day 24: April 2	Assignment No. 12: AI/Human Press Release (Due April 6, 11:59 pm)	
Week 13 Day 24: April 7	Public Relations Tactic: Owned Media	
Day 25: April 9	Assignment No. 13: Human-First Web Content (Due April 9, 11:59 pm)	
Week 14 Day 28: April 14	(cont.)/ Final Project Lab Time	
Day 29: April 16	Assignment No. 14: AI/Human Web Content (in class)	
Week 15 Day 30: April 21	(cont.) /Final Project Lab Time	
Day 31: April 23	Final Project Lab Time/Review Day	
9:45-11:45 am, Friday, May 1	FINAL EXAM FINAL PROJECT DUE	

VI. Statements

AI Use

During this class, we will use generative AI applications. You will be informed as to when, where, and how these tools are permitted to be used, along with guidance for attribution. Any use outside of this permission constitutes a violation of Ball State University's [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

See [AI Initiatives at BSU](#)

Academic Integrity

“Plagiarism: Rules and repercussions that concern plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be rigidly applied in this course.

These rules specify that any work you hand in during this course must be your own unless the work results from a collaborative group effort. To further qualify the phrase “must be your own” from the prior sentence, plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Representing the words, ideas or data of another as your own;
- Fabricating or falsifying material from a source or citation;
- Copying the work of another student or having somebody else generate your work;
- Intentionally helping or attempting to help another student commit an act of plagiarism.

Please note that plagiarism is **not** the only form of academic dishonesty. You're strongly encouraged to read the [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#) for more information. "

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected, and roll will be taken at each class meeting. Although points are not deducted specifically for absences, 30 percent of your final grade is based on Assignments that include required in-class participation, discussion, critique, and/or presentation.

If you have an unexcused absence on a day when an assignment includes a required in-class component, you will receive a score of zero for that assignment.

If you have a university-mandated excused absence, you will be permitted to complete the assignment or an equivalent alternative assignment, as determined by the instructor. Make-up work must be completed by the deadline specified by the instructor.

University-mandated excused absences

Absences will be excused for the following: funeral and bereavement leave, jury duty, late course addition, military absences, observance of religious holidays, pregnancy leave, student-athletes participating in University- or department-approved activities, and university advisories.

Absences for University Activities. The University expects its units and programs that take students away from class meetings to schedule such events in a way that will minimize hindrance of orderly completion of course requirements. Such units must provide a written statement to the students describing the activity and stating as precisely as possible the dates of the required absence. The involved students must deliver this documentation to the instructor preferably before the absence, but in no event, later than one week after the absence.

Students may encounter other circumstances (e.g. car accidents, job interviews, educational activities) that result in course absences. I may excuse these absences at my discretion with sufficient documentation.

In general, students are expected to notify all their instructors once they anticipate being absent for any reason (e.g., funeral) or as soon as possible after the absence begins (e.g., unexpected injury or illness). The student may need to provide documentation (with confidential information redacted when appropriate) to each instructor if requested.

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.

Disability Statement

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.

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.

School's Writing Statement

The School of Journalism and Strategic Communication regards writing proficiency as essential to the satisfactory completion of all journalism courses. Therefore, school instructors must monitor writing performance and language usage proficiency in all journalism courses. Student grades must reflect both criteria. This means you will be graded on your spelling, punctuation and sentence structure.

Professional in Residence

The School of Journalism and Strategic Communication may provide virtual professional development and networking seminars each semester to provide industry insight and encouragement for our student majors. These events provide an opportunity for you to connect classroom instruction with current professional practices. They also help expand your professional network. The school may offer in person and/or Zoom presentations. Extra credit will be offered if/when the school offers these seminars.

Student Rights Links

It is your responsibility to be familiar with your rights and responsibilities as a BSU student. Please visit the following site for relevant information: www.bsu.edu/studentcode Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities. This code includes appendices that contain Ball State's policies on academic dishonesty, policy and procedures for appealing final grades, student leaves for funerals, etc.

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](#).

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