

Media Writing/Editing
JOUR 7000 - 001
Fall 2011
5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursdays
206 Meeman Journalism Building

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COURSE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

CATALOGUE/COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Information gathering, writing, and editing skills necessary for any field within journalism and mass communication through lectures, discussions, and exercises that meld theory to technique; both laboratory writing and field assignments.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR MEDIA WRITING/EDITING:

- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

PREREQUISITE:

None

TEXTBOOK:

- *The Associated Press Stylebook* (any edition will suffice but 2011 is best).
- George T. Arnold, *The Media Writer's Handbook* (any edition will suffice but the 5th edition is best).

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability To Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically):

- Recognize the characteristics of news and newsworthiness, demonstrated through quizzes, lecture, and discussion.
- Acquire basic information-gathering techniques, including interviewing and research, through classroom discussion and field experiences
- Be familiar with libel and journalism ethics through classroom discussion and assignments
- Understand the difference between fact and opinion
- Learn the value of original content.

Performance Standards To Be Met (Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):

- Write news articles utilizing at least two people sources and one other source along with direct quotations.

- Utilize the AP Stylebook in applying basic news writing style rules for use in weekly writing assignments and quizzes.
 - Utilize a grammar book to apply the grammar principles to writing assignments and weekly quizzes.
 - Identify examples of good writing, solid headlines and new words and to discuss those in class.
 - Complete a final writing project that utilizes all the skills learned in the course.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR JOUR 7000:

Media Writing is designed to provide the student with the essential skills that are crucial to careers in journalism, public relations, and advertising. These are the abilities to gather and process information, and, above all, to write effectively. The goal is for each student to have acquired entry-level professional writing skills by the end of the semester.

Awareness:

- Learn how journalism works in today's media environment

Understanding:

- understand the difference between fact and opinion;
- appreciate the value of original journalism, of intellectual integrity;
- recognize the qualities of newsworthiness;
- learn the basics of news gathering;
- study the principles of effective story telling

Application:

As a major step toward a career, JOUR 7000 will require students to do the following:

- read and analyze news stories in order to learn what constitutes news;
- practice correct grammar, punctuation and word usage;
- learn AP news writing style;
- practice lead writing;
- develop information-gathering skills and apply them to assignments;
- keep abreast of local, national, and international news

OBJECTIVE OF COURSE:

This course will introduce students to basics of writing for the news industry. Students will learn the basic skills needed for a career in journalism, public relations and advertising. The goal by the end of the semester is to have student writing at a level that allows them to succeed in future journalism courses and writing at an entry level for a position in journalism, public relations or advertising. Along with writing, students will focus on identifying newsworthiness, knowing appropriate style and keeping up to date on news events. Some of the course focuses on editing skills, which are important for professionals in the field.

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

This is a writing course. Consequently, students will write every week and receive regular feedback and coaching on their work. The class will be consist of both lecture and laboratory time, to be determined by the instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students will be evaluated on these criteria:

- Weekly writing assignments. Each student will complete a weekly writing assignment, some of which will be news articles. The topics of the news articles will be approved in advance by the instructor. The articles should be newsworthy, well-written and in the proper style. Assignments will be reduced one letter grade for each class period it is late.

Writing Assignments

- 1 –A news story about yourself. Due Sept. 8.
- 2 – Story ideas and list of questions for three sources. Due. Sept. 15.
- 3 – General news story based on those interviews. Due Sept. 22.
- 4 – Re-write of general news story in class. Due Sept. 29.
- 5 – Detailed discussion of attribution, proper use of quotes. Due Oct. 6
- 6 – Interview of instructor and story assignment in class. Due Oct. 13.
- 7 – Event coverage story. Due Oct. 20.
- 8 – Re-write of event story in class. Due Oct. 27.
- 9 – Attend First Amendment Conference for extra credit. Nov. 3.
- 10 – News release story. Due Nov. 10.
- 11 – Feature story. Due 17.
12. Re-write feature story. Due Dec. 1.

- AP Style-grammar quizzes. Students will take periodic quizzes on sections of the AP Stylebook. These quizzes will be closed book. Students will know in advance what sections of the AP Style book will be covered. There will also be some general grammar stuff from the Media Writer’s Handbook and some general basic factual stuff to be corrected as well. If a student misses class the day of a quiz, it cannot be made up.
- Final writing assignment. The course will culminate in a final news article that combines the skills learned throughout the semester. The length of this final assignment will be longer than the previous assignments, and the topic will also be approved in advance. Assignments will be reduced one letter grade for each day it is late.
- Journal assignments. These assignments will require students to come up with four examples of items they notice in any publication or online source. The idea is to get students noticing good writing and noticing writing that could be improved.
- A Final Exam. The final exam will cover the basic themes of the course. The best strategy for the final exam is to keep up to date on the chapter readings and participate in class.

GRADING:

Weekly writing assignments (12 assignments at 20 points each) – 240 points
 AP Style Quizzes (10 quizzes at 20 points each) - 200 points
 Final Writing assignment - 50 points
 Journal assignments (4 assignments at 15 points each) 60 points
 Final Exam - 50 points

Total - 600 points

GRADING SCALE:

540- 600 A
 480 to 539 B
 420 to 479 C
 360 to 419 D

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Media Writer's Handbook	Due in Class
Sept. 1	Introduction to writing news; Clarity/Conciseness, grammar, spelling, punctuation.		
Sept. 8	News judgment and how to define newsworthiness.	Chapters 1-2-3	Writing Assignment 1 AP Style Quiz 1 (A,B)
Sept. 15	Writing leads; covering meeting and speeches/the state of newspaper publishing today	Chapters 4-5-6	Writing Assignment 2 AP Style Quiz 2 (C)
Sept. 22	The middle and end of a news story	Chapters 7-8-9	Writing Assignment 3 AP Style Quiz 3 (D,E,F)
Sept. 29. 1	Refining story ideas and sources; evaluating info source credibility; quotes and attribution.	Chapters 10-11-12	Writing Assignment 4 AP Style Quiz 4 (G, H, I)
Oct. 6	Interviewing. When and how to use quotations.	Chapters 13-14-15	Writing Assignment 5 AP Style Quiz 5 (J, K,L,M)
Oct. 13	How to write a profile; specialized stories Story structures; in-class writing and editing	Chapters 16-17-18	Writing Assignment 6 AP Style Quiz 6 (N,O,P)
Oct. 20	Public affairs, government reporting and writing	Chapters 19-20-21	Writing Assignment 7 AP Style Quiz 7 (Q, R,S)
Oct. 27	Writing for broadcast Writing for the Web.	Chapters 22-23-24	Writing Assignment 8 AP Style Quiz 8

			(T, U, V, W)
Nov. 3	Public relations writing.	Chapters 25-26-27	Writing Assignment 9 AP Style Quiz 9 (X, Y, Z and sports)
Nov. 10	Obituary, speech and weather stories	Chapters 28-29, Ref. 1-5.	Writing Assignment 10 AP Style Quiz 10 (business and punctuation)
Nov. 17	Quick look at the role of editing		Writing Assignment 11
Nov. 24	No class Thanksgiving		
Dec. 1	Libel and copyright laws; Ethical issues		Writing Assignment 12
Dec. 8	Journalist as a professional		
Dec. 15	Final Exam		Final writing project due

Notes

- Attendance is imperative in this class. Because it meets just once per week, students who miss a class will put themselves behind. If a student knows about an expected absence, please contact the instructor in advance.
- All students should save all their work with some kind of computer disc or flash drive. Bring the device to class with you every class period. Most assignments will be printed out for grading, but the online story should include links so an electronic file would be best.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

EMAIL: You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as AOL, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the university.

CELLPHONES: Must be turned off during class.

ATTENDANCE: Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING: In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university. "Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all." (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be to

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;

- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- Awareness: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- Understanding: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
- Application: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.