

## **Media Writing/Editing**

Journalism 7000-M50

Fall 2012

5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursdays on the World Wide Web

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Office Hours

9 to 11:30 a.m. Tuesday; noon to 2:30 p.m. Fridays

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## **COURSE 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.

**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 5<sup>th</sup> edition is best).

### **CLASSROOM FORMAT:**

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 articles should be newsworthy, well written and in the proper style. They should be placed in the course Web site's dropbox. Assignments will be reduced one letter grade for each class period it is late.

#### Writing Assignments

- 1 – A news story about yourself – Sept. 6
- 2 – Story ideas and list of questions for three sources – Sept. 13
- 3 – General news story – Sept. 20
- 4 – Re-write of general news story – Sept. 27
- 5 – Identifying the need for attribution – Oct. 4
- 6 – Q-A interview – Oct. 11
- 7 – Event coverage story – Oct. 18
- 8 – Re-write the event story – Oct. 25
- 9 – Online news story – Nov. 1
- 10 – News release story – Nov. 8
- 11 – Feature story – Nov. 15
12. Re-write feature story – Nov. 29

- AP Style-grammar quizzes. Students will take weekly quizzes on sections of the AP Stylebook. 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. There will be a bonus quiz at the end of the semester.

- 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 are reduced one letter grade for each day it is late. It is due on Dec. 6.
- Journal assignments. These assignments will require students to come up with three 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. If a student does not submit one in time for class discussion, there is no opportunity to make it up.
- 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. There is no online class that day. All students need to do is access the exam that day via the course Web site.

### **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	60 points
Journal assignments (10 assignments at 5 points each)	50 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  
0 to 2359 F

### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION ONLINE:**

This course meets from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. each Thursday of the fall semester. Students are expected to be logged in and ready to discuss and work during the class period. Also, students should be prepared to access the course Web site during class hours. The class will run about an hour and a half then a short 15 minute break will be taken. The course then continues until 8:30 p.m. As an online course, it is imperative that students actively participate and engage during the online component.

A link will be sent to all students directing them to the online classroom. It is also on the course Web site at <https://elearn.memphis.edu/>

All course materials will be available on the course Web site as well.

### **TENTATIVE TIMETABLE FOR MEDIA WRITING/EDITING**

Date	Topic	Media Writer's Handbook/AP Stylebook	Due in Class
Week 1 Aug. 30	Introduction to writing news; Clarity/Conciseness, grammar, spelling, punctuation.		
Week 2 Sept. 6	News judgment and how to define newsworthiness.	Chapters 1-2- 3 A-B	Writing Assignment 1 AP Style Quiz 1
Week 3 Sept. 13	Writing leads; structure of a news article	Chapters 4-5- 6 C	Writing Assignment 2 AP Style Quiz 2
Week 4 Sept. 20	Refining story ideas and sources; evaluating info source credibility; quotes and attribution.	Chapters 7-8- 9 D-E-F	Writing Assignment 3 AP Style Quiz 3
Week 5 Sept. 27	Interviewing. When and how to use quotations.	Chapters 10- 11-12 G-H-I	Writing Assignment 4 AP Style Quiz 4
Week 6 Oct. 4	How to write a profile; specialized stories; More story structures;	Chapters 13- 14-15 J-K-L-M	Writing Assignment 5 AP Style Quiz 5
Week 7 Oct. 11	No Class – Instructor is out		Writing Assignment 6
Week 8 Oct. 18	Public affairs, government reporting and writing	Chapters 16- 17-18 N-O-P	Writing Assignment 7  AP Style Quiz 6
Week 9 Oct. 25	Writing for broadcast Writing for the Web.	Chapters 19- 20-21 Q-R-S	Writing Assignment 8  AP Style Quiz 7
Week 10	Public relations writing.	Chapters 22- 23-24	Writing Assignment 9

Nov. 1		T-U-V-W	AP Style Quiz 8
Week 11 Nov. 8	Obituary, speech and weather stories	Chapters 25- 26-27 X-Y-Z-Sports	Writing Assignment 10 AP Style Quiz 9
Week 12 Nov. 15	Quick look at the role of editing	Chapters 28- 29-30 Social Media	Writing Assignment 11 AP Style Quiz 10
Week 13 Nov. 22	No Class - Thanksgiving		
Week 14 Nov. 29	Libel and copyright laws; Ethical issues	Reference 1-5 Food- Punctuation	Writing Assignment 12 AP Style Quiz Bonus
Week 15 Dec. 6	Final Thoughts – shortened class		Final writing project due
Week 16 Dec. 13	No Class – Final Exam		

## NOTES

- All students should save all their work.
- All assignments will be depositing on the dropbox on the ecourseware site.
- All quizzes will be conducted and available on the courseware site as well.

## ASSESSMENT

### 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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

#### **EMAIL:**

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, 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.

#### **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.