

Advanced Media Writing

JOUR 7015-001, M50

Fall 2012

5:30-8:30 p.m. Thursdays

David Waters, Instructor

Office hours by appointment

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOGUE/COURSE DESCRIPTION: Designed to help students become more precise as well as versatile writers by diagnosing their writing, polishing their grammar and editing skills, and teaching them to write with clarity, cohesiveness, and conciseness.

PREREQUISITE: None.

TEXTBOOKS: Required: *The Glamour of Grammar: A Guide to the Magic and Mystery of Practical English*, by Roy Peter Clark (Little, Brown & Company, 2010); *The Elements of Style*, Strunk & White, (various editions, all good); Various editions of *The Commercial Appeal*, *The New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Yorker*, specialty publications and non-fiction narratives as assigned (most available online).

Recommended: *On Writing Well*, by William Zinsser (Harper, 1998); *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* by Lynn Truss (Gotham, 2004); *Sin and Syntax* by Constance Hale (Broadway, 1999).

CLASSROOM FORMAT: Each class will be divided into three parts: Discussions, exercises and in-class writing and editing assignments. Discussions will involve out-of-class reading, writing and editing assignments. Class attendance and participation is important. In-class work cannot be made up at a later date.

GRADING: In-class discussions, exercises and assignments: 40 percent.

Out-of-class assignments: 40 percent.

Final project: 20 percent.

NOTE: Evaluation/grading of writing assignments will be weighted toward individual progress and improvement.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE: Class Schedule for Fall 2012

Date	Topic/ Assignment	Reading	Additional Info
Week 1 Aug. 30	Clutter and clarity		
Week 2 Sept. 6	Words, word order, usage	Clark: Ch. 1-11	
Week 3 Sept. 13	Punctuation and spelling	Ch. 12-22	

Week 4 Sept. 20	Agreement; modifiers	Ch. 23-31	
Week 5 Sept. 27	Subjects, objects and verbs	Ch. 32-40	
Week 6 Oct. 4	Phrases, clauses and sentences	Ch. 41-50	
Week 7 Oct. 11	Style	Strunk and White	
	Fall Break (NA to this class)		
Week 8 Oct. 18	Media writing	The Commercial Appeal	
Week 9 Oct. 25	Advanced media writing	The New York Times	
Week 10 Nov. 1	Feature writing	The New Yorker	
Week 11 Nov. 8	Subjects, angles, interviews	Specialty pubs.	
Week 12 Nov. 15	Fairness, accuracy and avoiding the -isms	TBA	
Week 13 Nov. 22	Happy Thanksgiving		
Week 14/15 Nov. 29/ Dec. 6	Fairness, accuracy and avoiding the -isms/ Future of News	TBA	Final project review/ Final project due

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR ADVANCED MEDIA WRITING JOUR 7015:

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

- Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability To Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically): Students will review rules of grammar and punctuation and will practice using these rules.
- Students will improve their vocabulary to write more precisely.
- Students will gain skill in editing for conciseness, clarity, and accuracy in every aspect of the writing—from content to mechanical problems.
- Students will become aware of stereotyping on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, or sexual preference and learn to avoid such stereotypes in their work.
- Students will gain experience in gathering information and in writing articles for publication.

- **Performance Standards To Be Met (Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):**
- Students will complete grammar and punctuation exercises.
- Students will complete writing and editing exercises.

- Students will participate in classroom discussions of these exercises.
- Students will keep a portfolio containing examples of good and bad, proper and improper writing from various popular sources including media, business and the arts.
- Students will take weekly quizzes on grammar, usage, mechanics and style.
- Students will complete a final writing project: a 1,500-word feature story.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR ADVANCED MEDIA WRITING JOUR 7015: The class is designed to sharpen students' reading, writing and editing.

Awareness:

- Becoming aware of the meaning, power and purpose of grammar, including spelling, punctuation, syntax, usage, lexicography, etymology, language history, diction, semantics, rhetoric, literature and poetics.

Understanding:

- Understanding basic principles of grammar, usage, and style.

Application:

- Demonstrating knowledge of grammar and style in exercises and quizzes, papers and projects; and in editing the work of others both in and out of class.

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.

CELLPHONES:

You must turn them 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 course. 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.