

**Media Writing/Editing**

JOUR 7000-001.M50

Fall 2014, combined and online

5:30-8:30, Thursday

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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.

**TEXTBOOKS:**

- *The Associated Press Stylebook* (any edition will suffice but the latest is best).
- George T. Arnold, *The Media Writer's Handbook: A Guide to Common Writing and Editing Problems* 5<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw Hill, 2009).

**CLASSROOM FORMAT:** This course is a lecture/lab combination that involves regular, intensive practice. Access the class at (<http://ummeet.adobeconnect.com/jour7000online>).

**REQUIREMENTS:**

## A. Weekly writing assignments

Each student will complete a weekly writing assignment. Some of these will be news articles; others are news-gathering tasks. All will be announced in class. The articles should be newsworthy, well-written and in the proper style. Assignments will be reduced one letter grade for each class period they are late.

## Possible Assignments

- 1 – Interview and news story.
- 2 – Story ideas and list of questions for three sources.
- 3 – General news story.
- 4 – Re-write of general news story.
- 5 – Identifying the need for attribution.
- 6 – Q-A interview.
- 7 – Event coverage story.
- 8 – Re-write the event story.
- 9 – Online news story.
- 10 – News release story.
- 11 – Feature story.
12. Re-write feature story.

**B. Quizzes**

Students will take weekly quizzes on sections of the AP Stylebook as well as on basic grammar. 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.

**C. 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 they are late.

**D. 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 – 50%

Final Writing assignment – 25%

Final Exam – 25%

Quizzes – 10%

**TENTATIVE TIMETABLE:**

**Date**

**Topic**

**Reading**

**Due in Class**

**Aug. 28**

Introduction to writing news; clarity/conciseness, grammar, spelling, punctuation.

Writing Assignment 1

**Sept. 4**

News judgment newsworthiness.

Preface. Chapters 1-2-3

Writing Assignment 2

Quiz 1

**Sept. 11**

Writing leads; structure of a news article

Chapters 4-5-6

Writing Assignment 3

Quiz 2

**Sept. 18**

Refining story ideas and sources; evaluating info source credibility; quotes and attribution.

Chapters 7-8-9

Writing Assignment 4

**Sept. 25**

Interviewing. When and how to use quotations.

Chapters 10-11-12

Writing Assignment 5

**Oct. 2**

How to write a profile; specialized stories; more story structures;

Chapters 13-14-15

Writing Assignment 6

**Oct. 9**

Public affairs, government reporting and writing

Chapters 16-17-18

Writing Assignment 7

**Oct. 16-Fall Break**

**Oct. 23**

Writing Assignment 8

**Oct. 30**

Writing Assignment 9

**Nov. 6**

Writing Assignment 10

**Nov. 13**

Writing Assignment 11

**Nov. 20**

Writing Assignment 12

**Nov. 27**

**Dec. 4**

Writing Assignment 13

## ASSESSMENT

### **PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR MEDIA WRITING AND 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.

### **HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR MEDIA WRITING AND EDITING:**

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

**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.