

## **Reporting**

JOUR 3120-002

Spring 2015

Tuesdays/Thursdays (11:20 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.)

Meeman Journalism Building 206

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## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:**

Gathering news using basic journalistic tools and techniques. Writing assignments will take place in lab and field.

### **PREREQUISITE:**

JOUR 2121

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

- *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*, (New York: Basic Books, 2014). ISBN 9780917360589. Students should have this from Media Writing.
- *The Elements of Style Illustrated* (Penguin Books, paperback reprint, 2007)
- Tim Harrower, *Inside Reporting* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (McGraw Hill, 2010) ISBN 978-0-07-337891-6. Students should have this from Media Writing.
- A smart phone and access to a laptop or a desktop computer. Students cannot rely on using university computer labs. Journalists today need to be in constant contact with the Internet and social media, so make sure you have the devices to make that happen.
- A camera or smart phone for taking digital photographs.

### **RECOMMENDED MATERIALS:**

- • Kessler, Lauren and McDonald Duncan *When Words Collide: A Media Writer's Guide to Grammar and Style* (Thomson-Wadsworth, 2001). Students may have this from Media Writing. No need to buy an updated version.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Assignments will be completed both in and outside the classroom, so attendance and participation in class are vital. Class time is also valuable for discussions about news and upcoming assignments, so please be on time. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late will be counted as absent. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet if you arrive late to class.
- Here's how attendance works: I'm not interested in hearing excuses. You get **three free passes** during the semester. After you cash in the passes, missed classes are reflected in your final grade. For example, if you miss one additional class, your final grade drops a

letter grade. If you miss two more classes, your grade drops again. So if you miss six classes, your final grade drops two letters.

- Be sure to join our class Facebook page, because if you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out from a classmate what is due. Do not count on me to answer messages or emails about missed work. If you are unsure about deadlines, check the ecourseware drop box dates. Do not rely on assignment dates printed on the syllabus.
- There are no exams in reporting, but quizzes may be given on assigned readings, classroom discussions, current events, and AP style. You cannot make up quizzes, but you will be able to make up one missed quiz with a substitute assignment.
- You must stay informed about the news and about newsmakers. It is impossible to be a good reporter unless you are informed about local, national and international news, as well as the media industry. To facilitate news literacy, current event quizzes will be given regularly, and students will participate in class Facebook page discussions on developments in the media industry.
- All assignments must be filed to the ecourseware drop box by midnight (11:59 p.m.) on the day they are due. **Late assignments will NOT be accepted.** It is extremely important that you recognize the importance of deadlines in news and learn to file assignments on time.
- All assignments must be written in third person in a structure that conforms to standard media writing guidelines. Assignments will be graded on content, story structure, word count, grammar, punctuation and AP style. **One point will be deducted from story grades for every mistake in AP style, spelling, punctuation and grammar, so edit your work carefully.**
- Additionally, all assignments must conform to these specifications: All stories must be double-spaced with indented paragraphs and filed in a word document that is identified with a date, a byline and a headline. **DO NOT FILE ASSIGNMENTS IN THE TEXT DOCUMENT PROVIDED BY MAC. If assignments don't meet these specifications, they will not be graded, and students will receive a zero.**
- And finally, assignments for 3120 may involve several components. You must complete all parts of the assignment to receive a grade. **Assignments that are incomplete will receive a zero.**

#### **OTHER ISSUES:**

- Reporting 3120 continues to develop the skills learned in media writing with increased emphasis on developing sources and alternative story telling. Reporters today need to work in different ways on multiple platforms, so this class also will integrate more traditional reporting and writing with photography, headlines, captions and social media.
- Additionally, reporting students will collaborate with students in JOUR 4900, which is a multi-media visual communications class, to develop an online magazine to showcase student work.
- More specific reporting and writing goals for this class include:
  - Developing storytelling skills with words and photographs
  - Writing with ease, accuracy, and speed
  - Developing sources
  - Polishing writing mechanics and AP style
  - Reporting with social media
  - Writing headlines and captions
  - Publishing stories in print and/or online
  - Building professional online portfolios

## **GRADING:**

- Class assignments: 75 percent
- Current event quizzes, AP style quizzes, homework, and in-class work: 25 percent

## **TENTATIVE TIMETABLE**

A flexible syllabus is necessary so we can respond to news events as they occur in real time. Deadlines for assignments may change, so check assignment due dates regularly.

### **Part One: Telling stories with facts and observation**

*Week One: Reviewing the basics: Story ideas*

Jan. 20: Course introduction

Jan. 22: Meet in room 202 with JOUR 4900.

*Week Two: Reviewing the basics: News leads, story structure and AP style*

Jan. 27:

Jan. 29:

*Week Three: Reviewing the basics: Events and lectures*

Feb. 3:

Feb. 5: **Assignment One Due: Event or lecture story  
AP Style Quiz No. 1**

### **Part Two: Telling stories with pictures and people**

*Week Four: Photography and captions*

Feb. 10: Class with Matt on photography

Feb. 12:

*Week Five: Headlines*

Feb. 17:

Feb. 19: **Assignment Two Due: Slideshows**

*Week Six: Descriptive and anecdotal leads*

Feb. 24:

Feb. 26: **Assignment Three Due: Personality profile with info graphic  
AP Style Quiz No. 2**

### **Part Three: Telling stories with issues and trends**

*Week Seven: Student meetings*

March 3: Meet individually with students on writing

March 5: **Assignment Four Due: Personality profile rewrites**

*Week Eight: **Spring Break (March 9-15)***

March 10: **No class.**

March 12: **No class.**

*Week Nine:*

March 17:

March 19: **Assignment Five Due: Trend or issues story  
AP Style Quiz No. 3**

*Week 10:*  
March 24:  
March 26:       **Assignment Six Due: Trend or issues story rewrite**  
                      **AP Style quiz**

**Part Four: Telling stories with new media**

*Week 11:*        *Social media platforms*  
March 31:  
April 2:

*Week 12:*        *Field trip tweet-up (All content due to 4900.)*  
April 7:  
April 9:        **Assignment Eight Due: Top-10 story with photos**  
                      **AP Style Quiz No. 4**

*Week 13:*        *The New York Times: "Page One"*  
April 14:  
April 16:

*Week 14:*        *Online portfolios and Storify*  
April 21:  
April 23:        **Assignment Nine Due: Storify**

*Week 15:*        *Final presentations*  
April 28:        Online magazine presentation party  
                      **Assignment 10: Final Portfolios Due**  
                      (All stories and headlines posted in portfolios must reflect editing changes. Points  
                      will be deducted if copy is not rewritten, so keep up with rewrites throughout the  
                      semester.)

April 30:        Study Day.  
                      **Substitute story assignment due: Question and answer story with photos**  
                      **Substitute quiz assignment due: Assignment upcoming**

## DEPARTMENT POLICIES

### PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All Department of Journalism undergraduate students are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it during every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their concentration.

### 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 <http://iam.memphis.edu> 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. Personal student information, such as grades, is restricted to your UM email address.

**MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone to be used during class or to complete class assignments. Others do not allow them. Your instructor will set the policy for his/her specific 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. Your instructor will set the policy for his/her specific class. Students with excessive absences are encouraged to withdraw from the course prior to the drop deadline.

**DEADLINES:**

All deadlines are firm. Assignments turned in late will **NOT** be accepted unless arrangements have been made with the instructor.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers any fabrication of content and/or sources, misappropriation and plagiarism of facts or other content, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be completed on his/her own, and violations of copyright law as acts of academic dishonesty punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and/or department chair. Penalties might include grade reductions, failure of the course and/or 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).

**Intellectual property and copyright guidelines**

1. Ideas cannot be copyrighted.
2. Anything set down in a tangible form, i.e., written, is by law copyrighted.
3. If, in a paraphrase, your work is “substantially similar” to a copyrighted work, you are guilty of copyright infringement.
4. A citation indicates where you got material. However, that portion you do not show as a direct quote must be “substantially original” to you. In other words, you can’t just paste in something from another’s work, put a citation at the bottom and call it your own. You need a full rewrite in your own words and syntax so the unquoted material is “substantially original” to you.

**Plagiarism: From UM Student Handbook:** The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other

academic materials.

**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 me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**DIVERSITY:**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with civility. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communication reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

**WEATHER POLICY:**

Check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day’s work.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don’t know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

**FIVE PILLARS OF JOUR 3120**

- *Professionalism:* Students learn the skills required to work in media today by practicing more advanced applications of the basics learned in 2121: ethics, deadlines, information gathering, and writing news stories and features. Increasingly, work is evaluated on professional standards. Students learn how to query editors with story ideas and how to publish stories in print and online.
- *Writing:* Students continue to work on writing mechanics and AP style, but they write more complex stories, learning to integrate national sources, descriptive writing, and statistical information into their work. Students also are introduced to headline writing and caption writing.
- *Multimedia:* Although students write traditional news stories throughout the semester, they also learn alternative story telling techniques using photography, smart phone apps, and social media. All assignments in 3120 include a multi-media component to bring added value to written work.
- *Critical Thinking:* Students work independently and as a team to develop story

ideas and to target stories for publication. In 3120, they write more complex stories, learning to organize multiple sources and research into both multi-media and traditional print formats. Students also learn to develop trend stories and follow stories from breaking news.

- *Media Literacy:* Students stay informed about news and the media with social media, phone apps, and local and national newspapers available on campus. Media experts from print, broadcast, and online publications also give guest lectures to share professional experiences and opportunities with students.

## ASSESSMENT

### **PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR3120:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively, and independently.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences, and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate and edit their own work for accuracy, fairness, clarity, AP style, and grammatical correctness.
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

### **HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:**

#### **Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, and think critically):**

- Students will improve their writing skills.
- Students will improve grammar, punctuation, word usage, and AP style knowledge.
- Students will learn to develop multi-sourced stories.
- Students will become more confident interviewers and more skilled at identifying experts for stories.
- Students will learn to background stories through various forms of research.
- Students will learn to balance views in a story and to achieve fairness and accuracy.
- Students will learn to gather news using multi-media, such as digital photography, video, and social media.
- Students will become better informed about local, national, and world events.

#### **Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies):**

- Students will develop story ideas appropriate for targeted publications.
- Students will write multi-source stories.
- Students will interview experts and research background appropriate for each story.
- Students will meet deadlines.
- Students will complete assignments that require them to use multi-media formats.

- Students will complete assignments on headline and caption writing.
- Students will stay informed about news and the media.
- Students will try to publish stories in print or online publications.
- Students will update their professional portfolios with appropriate course work.

**HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR JOUR3120:**

- Students will post stories and multi-media on their professional portfolios.
- Students will learn about the importance of verification, attribution and accuracy in all completed projects.
- Students will come up with their own story ideas.
- Students will complete assignments targeted to specific publications.
- Students will complete assignments requiring writing and rewriting.
- Students will take occasional quizzes on textbook content, required readings and/or current events.
- Students will learn about databases they can use for statistics for stories and will complete an assignment using these databases to find specific facts and information.

**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.