

Advanced Reporting

Journalism 4120/6120-001

Spring 2015

9:40 to 11:05 Tuesdays, Thursdays

Meeman 202

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Writing and reporting news and in-depth feature stories on topics such as government, courts, education, science, trends and community-wide issues. The emphasis is on using public records and national sources as well as key local sources.

PREREQUISITE:

Jour 3120

COURSE MATERIALS:

No textbook required, but you must own an Associated Press Style Manual and must read the *Commercial Appeal* every day. Free copies of the *Commercial Appeal*, *USA Today* and *The New York Times* are available at various locations around campus, including Jones Hall, the library and the UC. You also must have access to a grammar book. The suggested book is the *First Aid For Writers: The Little Grammar Book* by our own Joe Hayden.

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

Class will be conducted through lecture and discussion and writing assignments done outside of class.

GRADING:

A 93 to 100 percent

A – 90 to 92 percent

B + 87 to 89 percent

B 83 to 86 percent

B – 80 to 82 percent

C + 77 to 79 percent

C 70 to 76 percent

D + 67 to 69 percent

D 60 to 66 percent

F 0 to 59 percent

Writing Assignments

Students will complete 14 writing assignments. The first 11 are worth 20 points. The assignments culminate in a final in-depth writing assignment, which will be worth 20 points for the first draft. 20 points for the second draft and then another 20 for the final version. Any writing assignment that is determined to have been plagiarized or fabricated will receive a zero. Late assignments will be not be accepted.

1. In-depth story ideas – Jan. 22
2. Story plan/schedule – Jan. 29
3. Public records letter – Feb. 5
4. Police/fire story – Feb. 12
5. Re-write police/fire story – Feb. 19
6. City council story – Feb. 26
7. Re-write city council story – March 5
8. Criminal courts story – March 19
9. Re-write criminal courts story – March 26
10. Interview feature – April 2
11. Re-write interview feature – April 9
12. First draft in-depth project – April 16
13. Second draft in-depth project – April 23
14. Final draft in-depth project – April 30

In-class Assignments

Students will complete an in-class assignment every week. The assignment will focus on the topic discussed during the week, and it is due by the end of the class period. Students cannot make up missed in-class assignments. Each in-class assignment is worth five points.

Quizzes

There will be 8 news quizzes during the semester. Each quiz is worth 10 points. Quizzes will be given every Monday in class. There are no makeup quizzes, but there is a bonus quiz at the end of the semester for whoever misses one. There will be an AP Style/Grammar quiz worth 30 points.

Online sites

Students are required to have an online site to showcase the work in the class. Each of the five story assignments is required to be on the site. The site is worth 50 points of the final grade.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Assignments (11 at 20 points each) – | 220 |
| News Quizzes (8 at 10 points each) - | 80 |
| AP Style/grammar quiz - | 20 |
| In-class assignments (14 at 5 points each) - | 70 |
| In-depth project - | 60 |
| Online portfolio site - | 50 |
| Total | 500 |

Graduate students/6120:

In addition to the work described above, graduate students are required to write an 8-10 page paper on a topic related to public records and public affairs reporting.

All deadlines must be strictly met in keeping with professional standards. All completed stories must be posted on students' online portfolio sites in order to get the credit for the re-write.

Schedule issues:

This class is designed to get students off campus and into the community to report news. All students must attend the Memphis City Council meeting or another city meeting. The class likely will attend the Feb. 17 Memphis City Council meeting, but those who cannot make it are welcome to attend another meeting. Also, students are required to go to the criminal courts building in downtown Memphis and do a story. Students also will interview a public official and get a police or fire report. All these activities are done outside of class and must be scheduled around other classes, work schedules and personal stuff. Please plan early in the semester.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

| Week of: | Topic | Assignment Thursday | Quiz Tuesday |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jan. 20-22 | Introduction to class/government reporting; story ideas | In-depth story ideas | |
| Jan. 27-29 | Story schedule discussion | Story plan/schedule | |
| Feb. 3-5 | Public records requests; City Council reporting; no class Thursday | Public records letter | News 1 |
| Feb. 10-12 | Plagiarism/fabrication; advanced web searching | Police/fire story | News 2 |
| Feb. 17-19 | Police-fire reporting; back grounding a person | Re-write police/fire story | News 3 |
| Feb. 24-26 | Using numbers and data; School board coverage | City Council story | News 4 |
| March 3-5 | Using a database; using a spreadsheet | Re-write city council story | AP Style/Grammar Quiz |
| March 17-19 | Using spreadsheets | Criminal courts story | |
| March 24-26 | Criminal courts reporting; Business reporting | Re-write criminal courts story | News 5 |
| March 31-April 2 | Reporting on state government; | School board story | News 6 |
| April 7-9 | Localizing a national political story | Re-write school board story | News 7 |
| April 14-16 | Putting together a big project story; property taxes, sales taxes | First draft in-depth story | News 8 |
| April 21-23 | Surveys, opinion poll reporting; Legal issues of copyright; libel and invasion of privacy | Second draft in-depth story | Bonus quiz |
| April 28-30 | Finishing touches on the final project | Final draft of story due | |
| May 5 | Presentation of final project story | Online site due | |

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 JOUR4120

- *Professionalism*: Students are introduced to professionals in the news business. Also, students analyze news articles produced by professionals. Students also attend news events and are required to behave as professionals.
- *Writing*: Students are required to write four standard news stories and then complete a final in-depth reporting story. All students must also submit re-writes to each of the stories.
- *Multimedia*: Students are required to post their news stories on their online portfolio sites and along with the final in-depth reporting story students are required to have some additional multi-media element such as photographs, chart, graph, table or map. The final story must also have at least two posted links on the site.
- *Critical thinking*: Issues such as fairness, balance and ethics are discussed in the course of complete assignments.
- *Media literacy*: Students are required to read and keep up to date on news issues, which are monitored by regular news quizzes where students are required to read local media and then discuss issues in the news.

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR4120:

- 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 gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications
- 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
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- 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, think critically):

- Students will recognize and critically analyze the role the press plays as a watchdog of government and other public organizations.
- Students will develop the finer techniques of information gathering including searching public records, interviewing uncooperative or hostile news sources, sensitivity in reporting on disasters and tragedies and avoiding manipulation by political image makers and other news sources.

- Students will learn the importance of a diversified press corps and diverse news sources.
- Students will develop writing skills that emphasize fairness, balance, clarity and in-depth understanding of complex public topics.
- Students will discuss and analyze various ethical dilemmas in public affairs reporting.
- Students will learn and apply computer assisted reporting techniques
- Students will learn to discern which Internet sources are legitimate for news stories and which are not.

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

- Students will report on police, criminal courts and public meetings such as a City Council.
- Students will conduct an in person search of public records
- During election years, students will monitor all types of media during a two-month period and turn in an in-depth analysis of the media's coverage of the election process. These reports will be turned at the first class after Election Day
- Students will be tested on current events.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to meet strict deadlines.
- Students will conclude the semester by using their acquired interview techniques, public records gathering ability and writing skills to produce an investigative or in-depth news story on a public issue involving at least six news sources. This assignment will count 20 percent of the final grade.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR JOUR4120

Awareness:

- Through class discussions and news quizzes students will become aware of issues in the news such as diversity, cultural sensitivity and ethics.

Understanding

- As students write public affairs stories, part of the evaluation is use of diverse sources and exercising cultural sensitivity. The students writing and information gathering will be evaluated on the criteria of truth, fairness, accuracy, ethics and diversity.
- Students are graded down if they are not objective and discerning in deciding which material to put into the story and what to leave out.
- Students are taught and graded on their application of creative and ethical interview techniques.

Application:

- Students will write four stories on the subject of crime, fire, city council and criminal court trials and one in-depth, multi-source story on a public affairs issue or problem.
- Whenever a story involves statistics, percentages or other numerical data, student must double check their calculations.
- Use various media to obtain secondary data.

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.