

**Reporting**

JOUR 3120-001

Fall 2016

Tuesdays/Thursdays (9:40 to 11:25 a.m.)

Meeman Journalism Building 206

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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS****CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

Writing and reporting news and feature stories using both traditional and new media techniques with an emphasis on developing sources and advanced skills.

**PREREQUISITE:**

JOUR 2121

**REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

- *The Associated Press Stylebook*, (New York: Basic Books, 2016). ISBN 978-0-917360-63-3  
Students should have this book from 2121. Earlier editions (2013, 2014 and 2015) are acceptable.
- *The Little Style Book* by Joe Hayden (Marion Street Press, 2015). ISBN 1936863950.
- 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.
- *The Elements of Style Illustrated* (Penguin Books, paperback reprint, 2007)

## 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 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.
- 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. Do not send late assignments to my email.** 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, sources, writing, story structure, word count, grammar, punctuation and AP style. **One point may be deducted from story grades for every mistake in AP style, spelling, punctuation and grammar, so edit your work carefully.**
- Rewrites that do not include the additional reporting discussed in editing notes will receive lower grades than the original stories.
- Reporters may publish class stories in the Helmsman, but only **AFTER** they are graded and rewritten.
- Additionally, all assignments must conform to these specifications: All stories must be filed in a word document, double-spaced with indented paragraphs, 11 point Verdana type. All documents must be identified with a date, a byline and a headline. **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 not be graded and students will receive a zero.**

**OTHER ISSUES:**

- Reporting 3120 develops the skills learned in media writing with increased emphasis on expert 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.
- More specific reporting and writing goals for this class include:
  - Writing with ease, accuracy, and speed
  - Developing sources
  - Developing storytelling skills with words and photographs
  - 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 (includes online portfolio)
- 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 due dates regularly in the ecourseware drop box.

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

*Week One: Reviewing the basics: Leads, nut graphs, story structure, AP style*

Aug. 23:

Aug. 25:

*Week Two: Reviewing the basics: Story ideas and sources*

Aug. 30: **Trend story pitch due**

Sept. 1:

*Week Three: Reviewing the basics: Observation, detail, descriptive writing*

Sept. 6:

Sept. 8: **Assignment One Due: Trend Story with Piktochart**

*Week Four: Reviewing the basics: Headline writing*

Sept. 13:

Sept. 15: **Assignment Two Due: Trend story rewrite**

**Sept. 17: Mandatory: Attend Cooper Young Festival in Midtown**

### **Part Two: Telling stories with pictures, people and new media**

*Week Five: Storify*

Sept. 20:

Sept. 22: **Assignment Three Due: Storify on Cooper Young Festival**

*Week Six: Photography and captions*

Sept. 27:

Sept. 29: **Assignment Four Due: Storify rewrite**

*Week Seven:*

Oct. 4: **Issue/survey story pitch due**

Oct. 6: **Assignment Five Due: Instagram photos and interviews**

*Week Eight: Fall Break (Oct. 8-11)*

Oct. 11: **No class.**

Oct. 13:

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

*Week Nine: Reporting with Excel*

Oct. 18:

Oct. 20: **Assignment Six Due: Issue/survey story**

*Week 10:* *Portfolios*  
Oct. 25: **Portfolios due for preliminary review @ start of class** (Include all edited class work.)  
Oct. 27:

*Week 11:* *Movie Week (Spotlight or Page One)*  
Nov. 1:  
Nov. 3: **Assignment Seven Due: Issue/survey story rewrites**

*Week 12:* *Elections*  
Nov. 8: Election Day  
Nov. 10: **Assignment Eight Due: Election story**

*Week 13:* *Catch-up Week*  
Nov. 15:  
Nov. 17: **Assignment Nine Due: Election story rewrites.**

*Week 14:* *Thanksgiving holiday (Nov. 23-27)*  
Nov. 22: **Assignment 10 Due: Final Portfolios: Links posted on class Facebook page @ start of class.**  
**Updated portfolios due Dec. 2 @ midnight**

Nov. 24: No class.

*Week 15:* *Class field trip*  
Nov. 29: **Field trip using social media**

Dec. 1: Study Day.  
**Dec. 2-8: Exams**

## **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 guest lecture 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.

### **DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

#### **PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:**

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media 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 from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.



All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

**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.

**MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. 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.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

"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.

**DEADLINES:**

Remember there's a reason "DEAD" makes up half the word "deadline." All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work in this class 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.

**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 Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**DIVERSITY:**

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

**WEATHER POLICY:**

Always 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.