

Reporting

JOUR 3120-003

Fall 2017

Tuesday/Thursday (12:40 - 2:05 p.m.)

Meeman 212

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

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

PREREQUISITE:

JRSM 2121

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- *The Associated Press Stylebook 2017* (New York: Basic Books, 2017). ISBN 046 509 3043. Students should have this book from 2121. Earlier editions (2015 and 2016) are acceptable.
- *From Boss Crump to King Willie: How Race Changed Memphis Politics* by Otis Sanford.
- 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.
- A clip-on Lavalier microphone for recording interviews for video and audio.
- The New York Times available in campus newspaper boxes or by digital subscription.

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. However, do not count on me to answer texts, emails or Facebook posts about missed work. Consult a classmate instead.
- If you are unsure about deadlines, check the ecourseware dropbox 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. You are required to read the New York Times and will be tested each week on the newspaper's content.
- Students who need additional help with writing mechanics will be required to attend mandatory sessions (at least four sessions by spring break) at the university's Writing Center.
- 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.**
- **Additionally, 15 points will be deducted for factual errors, such as misspelled names and proper nouns, incorrect dates, etc.**
- 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 for class.
- 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, such as a written story and a multi-media sidebar. 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 integrates more traditional reporting and writing with photography, multi-media, social media and headlines writing.
- 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)
- Quizzes, homework, in-class work, and participation: 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 description and observation

Week One: Reviewing the basics: News summary leads, nut graphs, story structure
Aug. 29 Course introduction
Aug. 31

Week Two: Reviewing the basics: Observation and description
Sept. 5 TBA
Sept. 7 **Assignment One Due: Descriptive profile**

Week Three: Reviewing the basics: Anecdotal and description leads
Sept. 12
Sept. 14 The New York News Times News Quiz/
Expect quiz every Wednesday.
Sept. 16 **MANDATORY: Attend Cooper Young Festival**

Week Four: Reviewing the basics: Photography and captions
Sept. 19
Sept. 21: **Assignment Two Due: Cooper Young Fest story with photos**

Part Two: Telling stories with issues, trends and data

Week Five: Developing trend and issue stories: ideas and story pitches
Sept. 26
Sept. 28

Week Six: Data and spreadsheets
Oct. 3
Oct. 5 **Assignment Three Due: Trend story with photos and data**

Week Seven: Individual student meetings
Oct. 10
Oct. 12

Week Eight: Fall Break (Oct. 14-17)
Oct. 17 **No class.**
Oct. 19

Week Nine: Headline writing
Oct. 24
Oct. 26 **Assignment Four Due: Issue story with data and photos**

Part Three: Telling stories with new media

Week 10: Introduction to Premiere
Oct. 31
Nov. 2

Week 11: Developing oral histories
Nov. 7
Nov. 9 **Assignment Five Due: Instagram photo slideshow with music**

Week 12: Oral history projects
Nov. 14
Nov. 16

Week 13: Thanksgiving Week
Nov. 21
Nov. 23 **No class. Thanksgiving holiday**
 Assignment Six and Seven Due: Oral histories with intro, photo and video

Week 14: Update portfolios
Nov. 28
Nov. 30 **Assignment Eight Due: Portfolios due @ start of class.**

Week 15: Class field trip
Dec. 5 **Class Field trip with live tweeting**
Dec. 7 Study Day
Dec. 8-14 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: ethics, deadlines, information gathering, and writing news stories and features. Increasingly, work is evaluated on professional standards. Students learn how to pitch story ideas and how to publish stories in print and online.
- *Writing*: Students work on writing mechanics and AP style, but they write more complex stories, learning to integrate national sources, descriptive writing, and statistical data 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 storytelling techniques using photography, video, smart phone apps, and social media. All assignments include a multimedia 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. They write more complex stories, learning to organize multiple sources and research into both multimedia and traditional print formats.
- *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 gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientations and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communication.
- 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 current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

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

- Develop and improve writing and reporting skills
- Present more meaningful context in stories through various forms of research and reporting
- Learn the nuances of interviewing expert national sources;
- Give stories more meaningful context through various forms of research
- Balance views in stories to achieve fairness and accuracy
- Study alternative story-telling techniques
- Stay informed about local, national and world events
- Understand the role of media in maintaining a democratic form of government

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

- Write complex multi-sourced stories with the use of nationally recognized experts for targeted publications
- Improve grammar, punctuation, word usage, vocabulary and AP style knowledge
- Develop story ideas for print and multimedia
- Develop more confidence and expertise for interviewing sources
- Report and write stories using social media, such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter
- Start to learn multimedia storytelling techniques using digital media, including photography and video
- Write headlines and photo captions for stories and photo packages
- Meet deadlines
- Understand importance of verification, attribution and accuracy in all completed projects
- Stay informed about local, national, and international news
- Stay informed about developments in the media industry

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR JOUR3120:

Awareness:

- Develop awareness of news vocabulary through weekly quizzes

Understanding:

- Understand newsworthiness

Application:

- Report and write stories about events and lectures
- Report and write trend stories and issue stories with both local and national sources
- Include relevant data in all stories
- Include photography and/or info graphics with all stories
- Include captions and headlines with all projects
- Develop detailed pitches for both written and multimedia stories
- Submit rewrites for all story projects
- Include captions and headlines with all projects
- Publish stories in campus and citywide publications
- Update professional portfolios with course work for end-of-the-semester grading

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. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 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 because of 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 and Strategic Media 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 your instructor 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.