

Media Writing/Editing

JOUR7000-001, M50

Fall 2015

5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays, 206 Meeman and on the World Wide Web

Thomas J. Hrach, Ph.D.

308 Meeman

Office Hours

9:30 a.m. to noon Mondays; 1 to 3:30 p.m. Fridays

(901) 678-4779 (office) (901) 590-4949 (home)

thrach@memphis.edu

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOG/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 later the better).
- George T. Arnold, *The Media Writer's Handbook* (any edition will suffice but the 5th edition is best).
- Joe Hayden, *First Aid for Writers: The Little Grammar Book*.

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

Students will be evaluated on these criteria:

- Weekly writing assignments. Each student will complete a weekly writing assignment, some of which will be news articles. The articles should be newsworthy, well written and in the proper style. They should be placed in the course Web site's dropbox. Assignments will be reduced one letter grade for each class period it is late.

Writing Assignments

1 –A news story about yourself. Due Sept. 2

2 – Story ideas and list of questions for three sources. Due Sept. 9.

3 – General news story. Due Sept. 16.

4 – Re-write of general news story. Due Sept. 23.

5 – Identifying the need for attribution. Due Sept. 30.

6 – Q-A interview. Due Oct. 7.

7 – Event coverage story. Due Oct. 14.

8 – Re-write the event story. Due Oct. 21.

9 – Online news story. Due Nov. Oct. 28.

10 – News release story. Due Nov.44.

11 – Feature story.. Due Nov. 11.

12. Re-write feature story. Due Nov. 18.

- AP Style-grammar quizzes. Students will take weekly quizzes on sections of the AP Stylebook. Students will know in advance what sections of the AP Style book will be

covered. There will also be some general grammar stuff from the Media Writer's Handbook and some general basic factual stuff to be corrected as well. 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.

- 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 it is late. It is due on Dec. 2.
- Journal assignments. These assignments will require students to come up with three examples of items they notice in any publication or online source. The idea is to get students noticing good writing and noticing writing that could be improved. If a student does not submit one in time for class discussion, there is no opportunity to make it up.
- A 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. There is no online class that day. All students need to do is access the exam that day via the course Web site.

GRADING:

Weekly writing assignments (12 assignments at 20 points each)	240 points
AP Style Quizzes (10 quizzes at 20 points each)	200 points
Final Writing assignment	60 points
Journal assignments (10 assignments at 5 points each)	50 points
Final Exam	50 points
Total	600 points

GRADING SCALE:

- 540- 600 A
- 480 to 539 B
- 420 to 479 C
- 360 to 419 D
- 0 to 2359 F

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION ONLINE:

This course meets from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. each Wednesday of the fall semester. At the first class, we will decide how to proceed either online or in the classroom depending on the number of students we have in the course. Students are expected to be logged in and ready to discuss and work during the class period. Also, students should be prepared to access the course Web site during class hours. The class will run about an hour then a short 15 minute break will be taken. The course then continues until 8:30 p.m. As an online course, it is imperative that students actively participate and engage during the online component.

A link will be sent to all students directing them to the online classroom. It is also on the course Web site at <https://elearn.memphis.edu/>

All course materials will be available on the course Web site as well.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

Date	Topic	Media Writer's	Due in Class
------	-------	----------------	--------------

		Handbook/AP Stylebook	
Week 1 Aug. 26	Introduction to writing news; Clarity/Conciseness, grammar, spelling, punctuation.		
Week 2 Sept. 2	News judgment and how to define newsworthiness.	Chapters 1-2-3 A-B	Writing Assignment 1 AP Style Quiz 1
Week 3 Sept. 9	Writing leads; structure of a news article	Chapters 4-5-6 C	Writing Assignment 2 AP Style Quiz 2
Week 4 Sept. 16	Refining story ideas and sources; evaluating info source credibility	Chapters 7-8-9 D-E-F	Writing Assignment 3 AP Style Quiz 3
Week 5 Sept. 23	Quotes and attribution.	Chapters 10-11-12 G-H-I	Writing Assignment 4
Week 6 Sept. 30	Interviewing. When and how to use quotations.	Chapters 13-14-15 J-K-L-M	Writing Assignment 5 AP Style Quiz 3
Week 7 Oct. 7	More story structures	Chapters 16-17-18 N-O-P	Writing Assignment 6 AP Style Quiz 4
Week 8 Oct. 14	How to write a profile; specialized stories;	Chapters 19-20-21 Q-R-S	Writing Assignment 7
Week 9 Oct. 21	Public affairs, government reporting and writing	Chapters 22-23-24 T-U-V-W	Writing Assignment 8 AP Style Quiz 5
Week 10 Oct. 28	Writing for broadcast Writing for the Web.	Chapters 25-26-27 X-Y-Z-Sports	Writing Assignment 9 AP Style Quiz 6
Week 11 Nov. 4	Public relations writing.	Chapters 28-29-30 Social Media	Writing Assignment 10 AP Style Quiz 7
Week 13 Nov. 18	Quick look at the role of editing		Writing Assignment 12 AP Style Quiz 9
Week 14 Nov. 25	No Class – Thanksgiving break		
Week 15 Dec. 2	Libel and copyright laws; Ethical issues		AP Style Quiz Bonus Final writing project due
Week 16 Dec. 9	No Class – Final Exam		

NOTES

- All students should save their work.
- All assignments will be deposited in the dropbox on the ecourseware site.
- All quizzes will be conducted and available on the courseware site as well.

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 concentrations.

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.

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 her/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. Students are permitted three total unexcused absences without penalty. After three absences, the student's final grade will be deducted one letter grade for each absence. After seven unexcused absences, the student will fail the course. Absences for illness and other catastrophic emergencies, such as a death in the family, must be documented (e.g. doctor's note or obituary) to be excused from the total absence count. Students with excessive unexcused absences are encouraged to withdraw from the course prior to the drop deadline.

DEADLINES:

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and mass communications. Assignments turned in late will NOT be graded. Late work is not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Students are NOT permitted to make up assignments, quizzes, tests, etc. that occurred during an unexcused absence. Students who will miss class and/or a deadline because of an excused absence are expected to notify the instructor immediately upon knowing the absence will occur; exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances. Students who are absent during the final exam are not permitted to make up the exam and will earn a grade of 0, which might result in failure of the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

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, a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done 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 department chair. Penalties might include grade reductions 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, but the way they are described can.
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 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:

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 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.