

Comm 205
Fall 2017

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M/W/F
10:25 – 11:15
Room 015

Office hours: M/W/F 9:00 – 10:00

Texts

Inside Reporting, Third Edition, Tim Harrower
The Associated Press Stylebook
The New York Times online (free, instructor will provide directions)

COMM 205 – Reporting & Writing Across Platforms – This course examines current issues in U.S. journalism with strong emphasis on developing skills in news reporting, interviewing, and writing. I have an expectation that each student will come to each class prepared to discuss current news stories.

In this course, students will study the skills and techniques necessary to write stories that can be published digitally online and/or in print, and for broadcast. They also will focus on the basics of interviewing, fact checking and of using descriptive techniques, as well as be exposed to diversity in all its forms and to the principles of ethics as they relate to journalism and storytelling. This is a writing-intensive course that involves a number of assignments.

Course objectives

Through class discussions, readings, quizzes, video clips, and assignments, successful students will develop fluency in news values, information, news gathering, news writing for digital, broadcast and print audiences. Students will gain the skills to meet strict deadlines, exercise good news judgment, become intelligent consumers of information, blend text and images for the Web, and use proper grammar, spelling and punctuation in all assignments.

August 28

Welcome, overview of class, examine syllabus, discuss grading, discuss academic dishonesty and discuss expectations of attendance and participation in class. We will have a discussion of laptops in class, eating in class and texting in class. We will discuss current news of the day in many classes including this one. On Writing Well” by Zinsser. How well do you write? Writing and your K-12 teachers. Finding your writing voice.

August 30

Interviewing techniques. MOS, 78-82

September 1

Hands-on interviewing. MOS, assign interviewing project

September 4

Labor Day

September 6

Brief history of journalism, journalism’s business model, Chapter 1

September 8

Interviewing and MOS. **Interview assignment due at the start of class. Late projects will not be accepted.**

September 11

Discussion of mental illness and drug addiction, assign general paper on mental illness or addiction.

September 13

Be ready to discuss Chapter 7 in Harrower text. First Amendment. Journalism in courtrooms, public meetings and FOIA. Libel. Privacy. Copyright. Seven deadly sins. Everyone brings an example in to present.

September 18

General paper on mental illness due at beginning of class. Introduction to the Associated Press Stylebook. Why style?

September 20

Continue discussion on AP Style.

September 22

Be ready to discuss Chapter 3 in the Harrower text. Facts and opinion in news. WWW and How. Examples provided in class.

September 25

Guest speaker.

September 27

Writing using the inverted pyramid. Writing news leads. Review Chapter 3.

September 29

Review of Chapter 3 in Harrower text. Writing using the inverted pyramid. Punctuation per AP Style Guide, Associated Press Stylebook. Quotes. Assign first news story.

October 2

Writing a basic news lead.

October 3

Guest speaker.

October 4

Leads, leads and more leads. Be a baby, demand attention. Inverted pyramid.

October 6

In-class exercise of 5 W's and inverted pyramid.

October 9

Fall Break

October 11

Story structure and re-writes. **First news story due.**

October 13

Be ready to discuss chapter 4 in the Harrower text. Sources. Diversity – worth the time and effort or just more politically correct window dressing? Assign news story two, video, photo and limited copy.

October 16

Using quotation marks and attribution. Video and photography.

October 18

Video and photography.

October 20

Video and photography. Before class, review chapters 7,8,9 and be ready to discuss in class.

October 23

Second story due. Discussion of topic.

October 25
Story ideas.

October 27
Guest Speaker

October 30
In-class writing assignment.

November 1
Skilled interviews on the street.

November 3
Assign story three. Chapters 8 and 9 Harrower text.

November 6
Sources for your stories.

November 8
Writing for the web.

November 10
Writing for TV.

November 13
Discussion of what makes for good writing. Everyone brings an example.

November 15
Guest Speaker.

November 17
Third story due. Writing on deadline. In-class exercise.

November 20
Assign fourth story. Writing on deadline. In-class exercise.

November 22
Thanksgiving.

November 24
Thanksgiving.

November 27
Explain to class your final news story and its importance.

November 29

Assistance for any student for any student needing help for last story.

December 1

Leads, inverted pyramid, quotes and attribution.

December 4

Edit video and photos for your final story if you have any.

December 6

Polish papers.

December 8

Test review and **final paper due.**

Grading

Students will be expected to know material covered in class discussions and in the textbook, and information related to news stories in specified articles. This knowledge will be measured through outside writing assignments, and through in-class writing and editing exercises. Quizzes will be given intermittently during the semester that will cover textbook reading, the AP Stylebook and news coverage in such selected publications as the The New York Times. The quizzes serve as an assessment of students' dedication to class readings and discussions, and as a measure of attendance.

Because attendance will be taken at the beginning of class, and only then, showing up on time is crucial. Tardiness and absences will impact final grades. If you're expecting to be absent or late, text or email the instructor before class. Get course notes from a classmate. For illnesses, please make every effort to provide documentation (doctor's note, proof that you at least made an appointment at the Wellness Center, which does not provide medical excuse forms). The preceding efforts will go toward constituting an excused absence, which is at the discretion of the instructor. Success in this class is dependent on student participation and on the completion of assignments by due dates. If you have an unexcused absence on the day an assignment is due, the grade for that missing assignment will be an F. There will be no make-up opportunities for unexcused absences.

Criteria for written work

A = Work must be free of your opinion and turned in by the deadline with few spelling, grammatical or AP style errors. Lengths, content and quality must meet or exceed the assigned guidelines. Information must be delivered with clarity. Appropriate attribution is required. The work should add meaningfully to a dialogue on the subject at hand and if possible provide for the reader information that is unavailable elsewhere. The opening paragraphs must generate interest and convey important information. The story must flow, logically, from one subject to the next

with an engaging and active voice. Quotes must contribute meaningfully to the work.

B-C = Three or more spelling, grammatical or AP style errors; minimal to noticeable missing information and sources; problems with the opening paragraphs and organization.

D = Four or more spelling, grammatical or AP style errors; significant missing information and sources; significant problems with the opening paragraphs and organization.

F = Misspelling of proper names or inclusion of any personal opinion; total lack of crucial information; severe problems with the opening paragraphs and organization.

Grading criteria for quizzes

Each will be worth 10 points. They generally will begin at the start of class, and students will have approximately 10 minutes to complete them. Quizzes will focus on current events, textbook knowledge, AP style, grammar and punctuation. Only in the instance of an excused absence will there be make-ups.

The class-participation component of your grade is not an extra-credit-kind-of-deal. It will be impossible to earn an A (or even a C) unless you participate actively.

We will be listening and sharing ideas on a range of topics. Students are expected to exhibit a supportive attitude for each other and an appreciation for diversity in opinions, beliefs and values.

In-class participation and attendance will make up 20 percent of your grade.

Here is the grading scale for class participation:

A = Frequent and meaningful contributions to class discussions that show insight and a deep understanding of material

B = Frequent and relevant contributions to class discussions

C = Occasional participation in class discussion

D = Participates only when called upon

F = No participation

Deadlines are important in journalism and in life, so you will be required to file assignments on time. Late assignments will drop at least one letter grade. The instructor does not accept assignments by email without prior approval.

Student assessment

Interviewing project	50 points
General paper on topic	50 points
News story #1	100 points
News story #2	100 points
News story #3	100 points
News story #4	200 points
Final test	100 points
Current events and AP Style quizzes	100 points
Attendance and participation	200 points

Total 1,000 points

A: 100-94 A: 1,000-940

A-: 93-90 A-: 939-900

B+: 89-88 B+: 899-880

B: 87-83 B: 879-830

B-: 82-80 B-: 829-800

C+ 79-78 C+: 799-780

C: 77-73 C: 779-730

C-: 72-70 C-: 729-700

D+: 69-68 D+: 699-580

D: 67-63 D: 679-630

D-: 62-60 D-: 629-600

F: 59-0 F: 599-0

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the
- Providing information to another student during an examination
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an
- Using any material during an examination without consent of the of the teacher

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source> .

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor assigning the grade of F for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

A complete description of the School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <http://www.luc.edu/soc/Policy.shtml>