

Loyola University Chicago
Fall 2017
COMM 205-21W Reporting Basics I; SOC 015
Wednesdays 4:15 – 6:45 p.m.

Instructor: Jessica R. Brown

E-mail: jbrown7@luc.edu (Please allow up to 24 hours for a response to e-mail on weekdays; and limited responses on weekends. Remember to include your name and the course on your subject line. Please use your Loyola account when sending e-mails.)

Office: SOC 218 **Phone:** 312-915-7726 **Office Hours:** Thursdays 2-4 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to teach students the fundamentals of journalism as it relates to news writing, reporting, interviewing and ethics. Quality journalism is more important than ever in today's media landscape, and this course will set students up for the lessons they will need as they pursue a degree in the field. Students will be expected to meet strict deadlines, exercise good news judgment, be aware of current events, and become intelligent consumers and responsible deliverers of information.

TEXT AND OTHER MATERIALS

Harrower, T., *Inside Reporting* 3rd edition (IR)

The Associated Press Stylebook, 2015 or later

Subscription (print and/or digital) to a U.S. news publications: You may get a FREE subscript to the New York Times here: <http://libraries.luc.edu/nytimes>. Proof of subscriptions is required.

GRADING

| | | | | | | |
|--------|---|----------|----|-------|----|---|
| 100-95 | A | 94-90 | A- | 89-87 | B+ | Quizzes/Exams (20%) |
| 86-83 | B | 82-80 | B- | 79-77 | C+ | In-class work/Participation/Professionalism (20%) |
| 76-74 | C | 73-70 | C- | 69-67 | D+ | Out-of-class assignments (30%) |
| 66-65 | D | Below 65 | F | | | Final Project (30%) |

Plagiarism Statement: Please see attached document

TURNITIN: Many assignments will be subject to review by the Turnitin service. Any story that is flagged by this service will require immediate attention.

SPECIAL NEEDS: Students are urged to contact me should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have a special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me within the first 2 weeks of the semester so that arrangements can be made with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SSWD website: <<http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>>

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- 1.) Readings and assignments are due on the day they are listed.
- 2.) No absence will be excused unless it is because of the death of a loved one or serious illness or injury. You will be required to present proof for an excused absence. Proof **MUST** be given no later than your first day back.
- 3.) Unless otherwise instructed, **ALL** students should upload stories to Sakai on a Word document, typed in **Times New Roman, 12 pt., double-spaced in paragraph form**, with their name, date, name of assignment, and word count in the top right corner. If there is no Sakai assignment, the story should be handed in as a hard copy using the same parameters, and stapled in the top left corner. Stories not properly formatted or turned in as requested will **lose 5 points**.
- 4.) Unless otherwise instructed, **NO** work will be accepted via email. However, if you have issues with uploading content to Sakai, you may email me your work instead. Always contact IT if you have problems with your password or login.
- 5.) You must be present to complete in-class/on deadline assignments, unless you have an excused absence. In this situation, the assignment must be completed by the next 48 hours, minus 5 points per day.
- 6.) **REAL-WORLD ASSIGNMENTS (RWA):** ALL real-world assignments are subject to publication on online. Students should make it clear to all sources and subjects that their stories are intended for actual publication.
- 7.) Plagiarism **WILL NOT** be tolerated. Please read carefully the Academic Integrity Policy provided to you at the start of the semester and available on Sakai.
- 8.) **RE-DOs:** Students may re-do **3 assignments**, which they receive a grade of **C- or less**. Re-dos may be subject to additional reporting and longer length. These assignments **MAY NOT** have had a built-in draft. You have one week after the original graded work is returned to complete a re-do. Re-dos will receive the **average of the two scores** for both versions. Re-dos may only be turned in as a hard copy. **NO** rewrites will be accepted after Nov. 29, even if this date is less than the one week parameter set above. There will be **NO** re-dos on assignments with **missing source lists** or that have issues with **plagiarism**.
- 9.) **DRAFTS:** Several assignments have required drafts. These drafts are worth 10 points. Drafts should be turned in as a hard copy only.
- 10.) **WRITING HELP:** As this is an intensive writing course, you may find that you need additional help. Please visit the Writing Center: <http://www.luc.edu/writing/home/> if necessary. However, journalism is a unique type of writing, and your issues may not necessarily be addressed at the

- Writing Center. If your issue is basic English and sentence construction this resource is fine. If your issue is how to use language and information to tell a news story then see me for more help.
- 11.) Because this is a journalism writing intensive course, your writing will be graded on your ability to communicate via the written word. This includes your use of grammar, spelling, punctuation and AP Style. You will also be graded on journalistic practices, which will be detailed in the text, handouts and in-class discussions.
 - 12.) **QUIZZES:** Each quiz will be worth 20 points. **I will drop the lowest quiz grade**, which means you get the full 20 points on the lowest grade. They begin promptly at the start of class and students will have approximately **7-10 minutes** to complete them. There will be no make-up quizzes. Students may use their AP stylebooks, but no other resources. Quizzes will consist of current events, general knowledge, AP style, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and writing.
 - 13.) Students are required to take an assessment exam at the beginning and end of the semester. This is mandated by the Office of the Provost. Your score on the assessments WILL NOT reflect on your grade for this course
 - 14.) **SOURCE LISTS:** A source list is required for all **RWA** stories where you have **quoted or paraphrased** a person. This list is similar to a reference list one would use at the end of an essay or report, but it is strictly for personal communication. The list **MUST** include the sources' full name, title/occupation, place of residence and contact information. If the source is a student you should supply the major, year in school and where enrolled. Contact information may be a phone number, email address or social media handle. Journalists maintain source lists so they can locate their subjects if more information is needed later, or to prove that they exist in the event an ethical issue in reporting arises. A missing source list will be an automatic **20-point deduction**.
 - 15.) **PARTICIPATION:** We will regularly discuss current events and students will be asked to contribute or even lead discussions. This graded portion will also include general, daily contributions to course discussions and activities. Topics may be difficult, but please try to participate. I will do my best to keep the classroom a welcoming space for all voices.
 - 16.) **PROFESSIONALISM**** will be assessed on these criteria: being on time for class; not leaving class before it's been adjourned; being disruptive or rude to others; texting; gaming; playing games; using social networks; using technology or devices for purposes other than our course work; being deceptive about absences, missed work, or other course issues. I will make note of any of these issues and adjust this grade accordingly.

THE COURSE (Subject to change)

Week 1: Course Overview; Journalism Basics

Aug. 30 – The syllabus; The job of the journalist; Yesterday’s news and today’s challenges

What is News?; The structure of a news story

EXERCISES: Why is this story newsworthy?; The anatomy of a news story

Reading: IR introduction, chapter 1-3

Week 2: AP Style; Writing Leads

Sept. 6 – Using the AP stylebook; Working with leads

EXERCISE: AP Style practice; Writing Leads; **ASSESSMENT I**

Reading: AP Style A-D

ASSIGNMENT: Eight leads, due Sept. 13

Week 3: Interviewing; Briefs

Sept. 13 – How to conduct an interview; Sourcing; Working with briefs (practice)

EXERCISE (deadline): Person on the street

Quiz 1

Reading: IR chapter 4; AP Style E-H

DUE: Eight Leads

ASSIGNMENT: Writing Briefs, due Sept. 20

Week 4: Writing Quotes and Attribution; Covering Tragedies

Sept. 20 – Picking the right quote; Writing proper attributions; Dissect an accident/disaster story

Quiz 2

Reading: IR chapter 5; AP Style I-M

EXERCISE: Writing an accident story, due at end of class

DUE: Writing Briefs

ASSIGNMENT: Writing a news story from an interview, due Sept. 27

Week 5: Meeting, Speeches and Events

Sept. 27 – **DUE: News story from interview**

Dissect a speech/meeting story

EXERCISES: Asking the right questions; Writing a meeting story (deadline)

Quiz 3

Reading: AP Style N-S

RWA: Covering an event/speech/meeting; due Oct. 18

Week 6: Feature Reporting; Law & Ethics

Oct. 4 – Dissecting a profile structure; Legal issues in journalism & FOIA

EXERCISE: 10 Questions/Partner Interviews; Ethical Decision-making & FOIAs

Quiz 4

Reading: IR chapter 6-7; AP Style T-Z, libel

Watch: <https://youtu.be/TppG2Wcl3bY>

RWA: Partner Profile – draft due Oct. 10, final due Oct. 18

Week 7: Profiles; Opinion Writing; Mid-term

Oct. 11 – Midterm Exam: Profile fixes

DUE Partner Profile draft (turn in hard copy)

Week 8: Opinion Writing & Bias

Oct. 18 – Writing columns; Identifying bias

EXERCISES: Find facts to support an opinion; Set the scene; due at end of class

RWA: Opinion piece, draft due Oct. 25, final story due Nov. 1

DUE: RWAs – event/speech/meeting & partner profile

Reading: <http://digitaletics.org/essays/journalistic-objectivity-fiction/>

Week 9: Alternative Story Forms (ASFs) & Graphics Part I

Oct. 25 – Math for journalists; Telling stories in non-traditional ways

EXERCISE: ASF ideas

Reading: AP Style business and sports; IR chapter 8

Quiz 5

DUE: RWA Opinion draft (hard copy only)

RWA: ALT/Graphic Story, due Nov. 8

Week 10: ASFs & Graphics Part II; Press Releases

Nov. 1 – EXERCISE: TBD

Reading: IR chapter 9 AP Style social media

Quiz 6

RWA: Final project detailed, plan due Nov. 15; draft due Nov. 29

DUE: RWA Opinion story final

Week 11: Broadcast Journalism; Final Project

Nov. 8 – Writing for the ear

EXERCISE: Writing & delivering leads for broadcast

Reading: IR chapter 9 AP Style social media

Quiz 7

Week 12: Follow-up Stories

Nov. 15 – EXERCISE: Writing a story with updates (deadline)

Quiz 8

DUE: Final project package plan/ budget line(s)

Week 13: Gobble, gobble

Nov. 22 – NO CLASS; THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14: Final Project work; Film

Nov. 29 – Movie TBD

DUE: final project draft due (2 hard copies)

Week 15: Finals galore

Dec. 6 – Review for final; **ASSESSMENT II**

DUE: RWA final project

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, Dec. 13, 4:15 p.m.

ASSIGNMENTS: details & due dates (subject to change): In-class work may not be posted below.

Sept. 7 – Eight leads; 80 points

See Sakai for details.

Sept. 14 – Writing Briefs; 100 points

See Sakai for details.

Sept. 21 – Writing from an interview; Word count = 250-300

Based on the lessons about interviewing, writing quotes, sources and attribution, craft a story using the transcription provided to you on the handout.

Oct. 18 – Partner Profile (w/draft), Word count = 400-450

UPLOAD TO SAKAI: You will be partnered with a fellow student to write a profile on one another. You must interview both your partner and one other source who can speak intelligently about the subject. From interviews, and other research, this profile should highlight a **single angle** about this person that makes them **newsworthy**. A profile is NOT a resume or an attempt to tell someone's life story in 400 words, as that would be impossible. Focus and edit yourself. A draft is **due Oct. 11**.

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR SOURCE LIST!

Oct. 18 – Event/Speech/Meeting story; 100 points; Word count = 400-450; 100 points

UPLOAD TO SAKAI: For this course students must cover a **real-world** event, speech or meeting surrounding issues in: media; communication; social justice; or under-represented populations. Students must get approval for the event prior to covering it for this assignment. The event may take place at any local university, college, or community or public serving institution.

Students may turn this assignment in any time up until class time on Oct. 18.

Students **MUST** also provide with their story **proof of the event**. This can be a flyer, poster, or notice of the event via email or other electronic communication. The event must take place **between Sept. 27-Oct. 17**. The news story **MUST** include quotes from the speaker(s) and at least **two** other sources, most likely audience members. You should get well-rounded, diverse quotes from diverse subjects. Well-written, timely stories may be published online.

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR SOURCE LIST!

Oct. 19/23 – Opinion (w/draft); 100 points; Word count = 500-600

DRAFT = HARDCOPY ONLY; FINAL = UPLOAD TO SAKAI. Topic TBD. This column has a required draft, which is worth 10 points. I will take great note of:

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| ■ Voice/Style | ■ Point of view | ■ Opinion supported by facts |
| ■ Context | ■ Format | ■ Opinion type |

Oct. 30 – ALT/Graphics; 100 points; Word count = N/A

FINAL = HARDCOPY & SAKAI. For this assignment you will choose a topic to be determined and craft a short-form (aka Alternative Story Form). More details will come later.

Dec. 6 – Final Project; Word count = 600-700

HARDCOPY, SAKAI: The final project will be a feature on a topic to be determined once it is formally assigned. The final project will be a real-world assignment, in which the final project may be published online. The final product **MUST** consist of the following elements:

- A 600-700 word (data forward) story
- A minimum of two (direct quoted or paraphrased) interviews w/ transcription(s)

- Two or more images to accompany story
- An ASF that complements the story (timeline, list, etc.)

- **Nov. 15: Package plan/budget line (60 points):** You must turn in a hardcopy that details your
 - 1.) topic written as a proper, working lead (& nutgraph if applicable);
 - 2.) the type of people or names of people you want interview;
 - 3.) the URL of other sources you may use to gather more information,
 - 4.) What/Who you will photograph;
 - 5.) three ASF options w/ rationale;

- **Nov. 29: Draft one:** Please bring a hard copy of your written content. MOST (if not ALL) of the reporting should be completed at this stage and, at least HALF of the story should be written.

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR SOURCE LIST!

FINAL EXAM: Monday, Dec. 13., 4:15 p.m.