

Reporting Basics I: Writing and Interviewing

COMM 205-21W (2717)

Spring 2016

Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:30-3:45 p.m.

SOC Room 015

Description:

Students will learn the fundamentals of journalistic-style reporting and writing, as well as the basics of working in a newsroom, including newsgathering, sourcing, interviewing, editing and working on deadline. There will be many writing assignments and style/grammar exercises. Students will be expected to be up on the issues of day, reading/watching/listening credible news sources on a daily basis.

Instructor contact information:

Dodie Hofstetter

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Email: dbhofstetter@gmail.com OR dhofstetter@luc.edu

Office hours: By appointment (Office: SOC223A)

Class objectives: Each week students:

- *Must read/listen/watch daily news reports.
- *May be given a reading assignment.
- *May be given a writing assignment.
- *May be given a quiz.
- *Will prepare questions when guest speakers attend class.
- *Will participate in class discussions.
- *Will be given assignments in writing by instructor.
- *Will edit assignments for spelling, style, grammar.
- *Will conduct themselves in a professional, ethical manner.
- *May read aloud assignments.

Required texts and materials: “Writing & Reporting for the Media” by John R. Bender et al, AP Stylebook, Local daily and Sunday newspapers (online is OK)

Grades: Grades will be based on a 4.0 scale

A=4.0, A-=3.67, B+=3.33, B=3.0, B-=2.67, C+=2.33, C=2.0, C-=1.67, D+=1.33, D=1.0, below is failing. Students must earn a minimum of a 1.67 in order to have a course count toward their major. If they must repeat the course, they do not earn credit hours but may improve upon their former grade.

Evaluation/Grading:

- A. Each week, instructor will return graded quizzes and writing assignments.
- B. A midterm evaluation will be presented to student by instructor one-on-one.
- C. Written assignments may be redone and re-evaluated once if they are handed in the next week after receiving grade.
- D. Students will be graded on class participation, written assignments, quizzes, attitude and attendance.

E. Late work/missed assignments will be accepted and will be graded down by one full grade. All assignments must be completed, but no credit will be given later than two weeks after original due date. **If assignments are not completed, student will not pass the course.**

F. In the case of an absence, it is a student's responsibility to contact instructor to report absence and to receive homework assignments **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. Do **NOT** wait until the next week or you will be behind. All assignments build on the last one. Assignments that were due on day of absence will be accepted one week late with a possible grade penalty.

G. Spelling, grammar and style mistakes will be subtracted from an assignment's grade.

H. All assignments from students must be typed and must be double-spaced, and a printed hard copy handed in for grading.

I. If a student sends an email to instructor, mark in the subject line: MESSAGE FROM LOYOLA STUDENT.

J. All assignments for the entire semester will total 1,000 points.

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 scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;
- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other

person during an examination;

- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

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, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;

- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

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 by 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's 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> **Students with**

Disabilities: Students who need special accommodations for

exams or class meetings because of a learning disability will provide instructor with a letter documenting the type of accommodations needed. If they claim to have a physical or psychological condition that hinders their ability to perform in class, medical documentation must be provided to the Office for Students with Disabilities and that office will assess whether or not your collaboration is required. These matters are confidential.

Class meeting schedule:

(Disclaimer: This syllabus may be amended as the course proceeds. You will be notified of all changes.)

WEEK 1

Jan. 17:

- *Introduction to course
- *Introduction of instructor
- *Introduction of students
- *Survey of news sources

Jan. 19:

- *Interviewing Questions
- *Explanation of writing assignment

WEEK 2

Jan. 24:

- *Style/grammar discussion
- *Pre-class reading assignment: Chapters 10, 11
- *Student presentations of Chapters 10,11
- *In-class exercise (“Quantify the Room”)

Jan. 26:

- *Assignment due: Classmate interview
- *Class presentation of interview assignments

WEEK 3

Jan. 31:

*Newswriting discussion (ledes, endings, nut grafs, bodies)

*Pre-class reading: Chapters 3, 7, 8, 9

*Explanation of homework assignment

Feb. 2:

*Student presentations of Chapter 3, 7, 8, 9

*Review homework

WEEK 4

Feb. 7:

*Pre-class reading: Chapters 2, 16

*Student presentations of Chapters 2, 16

*Discussion of obituaries

*Explanation of writing assignment

Feb. 9:

*Pre-class reading: Chapters 15, 18

*Student presentations of Chapters 15, 18

*Discussion of news releases

*Explanation of writing assignment

WEEK 5

Feb. 14:

*Assignment due: Report from a news release

*Style/Grammar discussion

Feb. 16:

*Pre-class reading: Chapters 4, 5

*Student presentations of Chapters 4,5

*Discussion of story ideas, reporting strategies, outlining, beats

WEEK 6

Feb. 21:

*Pre-class reading: Chapters 12, 13, 14

*Student presentations of Chapters 12, 13,14

*Continue discussion of beat reporting

Feb. 23:

Story assignment due: Beat reports

WEEK 7

Feb. 28:

- *Pre-class reading: Chapters 1, 6
- *Student presentations of Chapters 1, 6
- *Discussion of what is news, news sources, ethics
- *Style/grammar discussion

March 2:

- *Review for midterm

NO CLASS MARCH 7 and 9 (SPRING BREAK)

WEEK 8

March 14:

- *Midterm Part I, along with one-on-one evaluations

March 16:

- *Midterm Part 2, along with one-on-one evaluations
- *Explanation of next week's guest speaker

WEEK 9

March 21:

- *Guest speaker (TBA)
- *Writing assignment due: Q's for speaker

March 23:

- *Go over midterms

WEEK 10

March 28:

- *Pre-class reading: Chapters 17, 19, 20
- *Student presentations of Chapters 17, 19, 20

March 30:

- *Pre-class reading: Chapter 19
- *Style/grammar discussion

CLASS 11

April 4:

*Explanation of Final Project

April 6:

*Continue work on Final Project

WEEK 12

April 11:

*Continue work on Final Project

April 13:

*Continue work on Final Project

WEEK 13

April 18:

*Continue work on Final Project

April 20:

*Guest speaker (TBA)

*Assignment due: Q's for guest speaker

WEEK 14

April 25:

*Continue work on Final Project

April 27:

*Review for final

WEEK 15

*Final (TBA)