

SYLLABUS

Reporting and Writing Across Platforms

COMM 205-01W

Dr. Fletcher

MWF 10:25-11:15 a.m.

Mundelein 303

HOW TO USE THIS SYLLABUS:

THIS SYLLABUS HAS FOUR PARTS:

- 1. PART I PRESENTS DEADLINES FOR QUIZZES AND PAPERS. IT ALSO GIVES THE PERCENTAGE VALUE FOR ASSIGNMENTS.**
- 2. PART II DESCRIBES THE COURSE AND THE GRADING SYSTEM**
- 3. PART III CONTAINS THE GROUND RULES FOR THE COURSE**
- 4. PART IV PRESENTS THE CLASS SCHEDULE.**

THIS FORMAT SHOULD HELP YOU ACCESS INFORMATION QUICKLY BY SCROLLING TO “Part I, II, III, or IV.” It also will keep you on top of quiz and deadline dates, since they are listed first. It might be a good idea to copy and paste these inside your notebook or post to your phone.

IMPORTANT: You are responsible for knowing the content of the syllabus. The rules and regulations apply, whether you have reviewed them or not. You should also check Sakai each week and before each class (under “Announcements”) for any changes.

PART I: Exams, Quizzes and Paper Deadlines for This Class:

- ✓ **2/17: First Contents Quiz 10 percent of grade**
- ✓ **2/23 Paper One (800-1000 words) 10 percent of grade**
- ✓ **2/26 Grammar and Punctuation Quiz 10 percent of grade**
- ✓ **3/4 Second Contents Quiz 10 percent of grade**
- ✓ **3/22: Paper Two (900- 1200 words) 10 percent of grade**

- ✓ **4/4 Third Contents Quiz 10 percent of grade**
- ✓ **4/15 Paper Three (900-1200 words) 10 percent of grade**
- ✓ **4/20 Rewrites due**
- ✓ **4/29 Fourth Contents Quiz 10 percent of grade**

NOTE: We will talk about how to do the outside papers in class. I will also post a template for each paper assignment under “Announcements” on Sakai.

WORK THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER:

- ✓ **Lab work (writing in class on deadline): 20 percent**
- ✓ **Participation in class and lab (this means active and constructive contributions, not just attendance): may raise your grade by a half to one full letter grade. Minimal participation/distracting, disruptive behavior may lower your grade by a half to one full letter grade. (See “Participation,” in Part II, Ground Rules, below)**
- ✓ **Students will be given extra credit if they choose to learn AP Style and take a quiz on this second half of the semester.**

REWRITES: Lab assignments and outside assignments may be rewritten for a new grade; however, they must consist of new material. If you want to rewrite a lab, ask me for a different assignment. If you need to rewrite an outside paper, you must attend another event or interview another person. If your rewrite is lower than your original paper, you earn the higher grade.

You may hand in a rewritten assignment (hard copy) at any time during the semester. However, the absolute deadline for lab rewrites is 4/20. The deadline for these must be handed in as hard copies. No rewrites will be accepted after 4/20.

LAB DEADLINES: At the end of most labs, you will email me your work; the deadline is the end of class. Unless I tell the class that they have some extra time, if you miss your deadline, you’ll be marked down one point a minute.(with 10 points being a full letter grade).

Journalism is about meeting deadlines; it is better to send something that may need a few more sentences or some editing instead of not submitting your article at all.

PART II: COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GRADING STANDARDS

Course Description: This course fills a requirement for the Journalism minor and major and for Advertising/Public Relations. It is also a "writing intensive" course.

Course Goals: This course takes a critical approach ("critical" meaning both enhancing your appreciation of what it takes to gather and report the news and increasing your awareness of the news media's failures and difficulties) to contemporary media reporting and writing. You will learn about reporting and writing for different platforms (print, broadcast, and internet). An important emphasis throughout will be ethical issues in news gathering and reporting. This course will introduce you to the basic elements of media reporting and writing, with emphasis on developing news judgment, finding and verifying information, learning effective interviewing skills, meeting deadlines, and learning how to write clearly and concisely.

Required Text:

Reporting for the Media, 10th edition. Bender, et al. Students must have THIS edition by the second week of class.

NOTE: This is available at Loyola's Bookstore, WTC.

Class Format:

The first and second class of each week usually will consist of lecture and discussion. The third class usually will be lab, during which you will usually write in class, on deadline. Make sure you bring your laptop with you on lab days. Most assignments will be emailed to me.

Grading:

- ✓ You'll receive guidelines, posted on Sakai Announcements, for your three outside papers and for the four contents quizzes ahead of time.
- ✓ You'll be given a certain amount of points for each element of your labs and papers. These points will be converted to letter grades.
- ✓ I grade on a curve for each assignment. Your final grade will be an average of all your letter grades on assignments.

PART THREE: GROUND RULES:

Absences: Attendance counts. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting the notes from another student. Authorized absences for travel (e.g. travel for a club or team) must be cleared with me in advance. Documentation must be provided.

Plan carefully: If you miss a class, you cannot make it up (unless for pre-authorized travel or if you have a documented illness or authorized absence).

Laptop/iPhone Use: Laptops and other digital devices cannot be used to take notes during lectures, unless you have an authorized reason for doing so. Using one without such permission will count against your participation grade

Class Participation:

Positive Contributions and your final grade : In class, questions and comments are welcome. Contributing in class in a consistent, meaningful, and attentive way can raise your grade, at the professor's discretion, by as much as one full letter grade. You cannot receive an A in this class if you never contribute.

Negative Contributions and your final grade: Inappropriate classroom behavior (rudeness to others: being disruptive, distracting, or disrespectful) can lower your final grade by as much as one full letter grade, at the discretion of the professor.

The following behaviors will negatively impact your participation grade:

- ✓ Coming in late (Everyone gets one free late; after that, it counts).
- ✓ Leaving during class (unless it is for an authorized medical reason; you must bring in the documentation from SSWD by Week Two)
- ✓ Looking at your computer/cell phone, using your laptop, or doing other work during class.

For the above, I'll give you a warning the first time. After that, I'll keep track of the above, which could affect your final grade.

OTHER RULES:

- ✓ No eating is allowed in class. (unless it is for a documented medical reason)

- ✓ Make sure your cell phones are off (**not** on vibrate) before class begins.
- ✓ No laptops allowed during lectures, unless you have a documented reason for needing to use one, or if we're doing an assignment requiring laptops in class.

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

- ✓ **Plagiarism** of any form and of any length on assignments will be reported to the Dean of Students immediately and the student will receive a grade of "F" for the course. According to Loyola University guidelines(SOC website):

“ 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 submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, audio, video, etc.”

- ✓ **Fabrication** of a whole assignment, or any part of an assignment, will result in an “F” for this course.
- ✓ **Cheating** on an exam or quiz will result in an "F" for this course.

Office Hours:

MWF: I'm available before class and after 2:30.

Email me ahead of time to set up an appointment, since I don't have an office on this campus (I'm usually in the faculty lounge just off the Mundelein Café, however).

If these times don't fit your schedule, feel free to set up an appointment by e-mailing me at cfletch@luc.edu.

Throughout the semester, feel free to email me any time with questions about your work.

PART IV

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Changes in the schedule may be made, depending on the progress we make through the material and the availability of our guests, who may need to switch their dates with us.

Written assignments are due on the date indicated. If you fail to turn in an outside paper by the deadline, unless you have a documented excuse, your grade is F for that paper.

Articles may be added to your readings.

Note: Readings are to be completed by the date indicated. For each chapter, follow the page guidelines below and stop reading when you get to the exercises.

A brief quiz may be given at the start of class whenever there is a reading. If you come in after the quiz, you cannot make it up.

Pop quizzes may also be given on the lectures at any point during the semester. Quizzes will count as part of your lab grade.

1/20 Introduction.

Go through syllabus and assignments. Prep for observation.

1/22 Lab. Observation.

1/25 FOCUS: CONTEMPORARY JOURNALISM ACROSS PLATFORMS AND WHAT IS NEWS?

Read the following before class.

- ✓ Bender. Preface (xv-xviii. Stop at “New Features”)
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 1

In class:

- ✓ View NYT front page.

1/27 **Before class:**

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 2(Read through p. 24)

In class:

- ✓ View *Guardian* ad.
- ✓ Highlight the *most important* copy editing marks, inside front cover

1/29 Lab, first written.

Before lab, review Bender, Figure 1.5, p.11 on formatting papers. Pay special attention to where to put name, date, and slug line. **Five points off for incorrect formatting (this applies to lab and outside papers).**

2/1 FOCUS OF WEEK: COVERING EVENTS AND WRITING CLEARLY

Before class, read:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 10
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 15

In class: Discuss observation, note-taking, and getting quotes for first outside paper, due 2/23.

2/3 Before class:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 3.
- ✓ Continue discussion of chapters from Monday. Attribution search online.

2/4 STUDY GUIDE FOR FIRST CONTENTS QUIZ (ON 2/17) WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI.

2/5 Lab. Cutting wordiness

2/8 FOCUS: GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

Before class, read:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 4
- ✓ Bender, Appendix B, pp. 455-457

Receive take-home Grammar/Punctuation pre-quiz, due 2/10. Do this without looking anything up; the goal is to learn what you need to work on or Grammar Quiz on 2/26.

NOTE: Your Grammar/Punctuation/ Quiz on 2/26 will cover the above material PLUS the handout on common mistakes you receive in class today. If you feel your grammar is especially shaky (trust me, you are not alone!), I'm happy to work with you outside of class to clear up your grammar questions

2/9 Guidelines for Article One, due 2/23, will be posted on Sakai Announcements.

2/10 FOCUS: NEWS STORY ORGANIZATION

- ✓ Read Bender: Chapter 9 to p. 251. Skip "Narrative Style," pp. 194-198. Resume with "Using Transitions," p. 198 to end of chapter.

In class: Talk about what to listen for, look for, and how to take notes on 2/12 and 2/15 next week. Distinguish between hard and soft news. Talk re how to organize your first article and write a lead for your first article, due 2/23.

- ✓ Bring in Grammar/Punctuation pre-quiz.

2/11 GUIDELINES FOR WRITING PAPER ONE (DUE 2/23) WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI.

2/12 **Before class:** Read Bender, Chapters 7 and 8.

In class: Discuss lead-writing, especially for article due 2/23.

2/15 **EVENT COVERAGE, PART ONE** Today and 2/19 will form the basis for your first paper, due 2/23. Take notes both today and 2/19! The event consists of Zach Waickman, Bio-Diesel Lab manager, talking about sustainability at LU on Monday and giving us a tour of the lab on Friday.

2/17 **FIRST CONTENTS QUIZ (NOTE: This first contents quiz is worth 10 percent of your overall grade).**

2/19 **EVENT COVERAGE, PART TWO. IMPORTANT:** We will meet in the lobby of the IES Building and get a tour of the Bio-Diesel Lab. This and 2/15 will form basis for your first paper, due 2/23. Take notes!

2/22 FOCUS: ETHICS IN JOURNALISM

Before class:

- ✓ Read Bender, Chapter 6

- ✓ Read Bender, “Ethics of Visual Journalism,” p. 288-291 (Stop at “The Digital News Package”)

In class: Emergency questions re Article One, due 2/23

2/23 **ARTICLE ONE DUE**, CLASS COVERAGE (800-1000 words) by email to cfletch@luc.edu by 5 p.m.

2/24 ETHICS (cont) Finish discussion. View DART Center page on Interviewing Victims

2/25 GUIDELINES FOR SECOND CONTENTS QUIZ ON 3/4 will be posted on SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS.

2/26 GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION QUIZ

2/29 **FOCUS: BROADCAST REPORTING AND WRITING**

Before class: Read Bender, Chapter 12

3/1 GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLE TWO (DUE 3/22) WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS.

3/2 **No reading.** Finish Monday discussion and talk about article due 3/22.

3/4 **SECOND CONTENTS QUIZ (worth 10 percent of your grade)**

3/7-3/12 SPRING BREAK NO CLASS THIS WEEK

3/14 **FOCUS: Interviewing Skills: FOR PRINT AND LONG-FORM**

Before class:

- ✓ Read Bender, Chapter 11

3/15 Information about extra credit opportunity for learning AP Style will be posted under Sakai Announcements.

3/16 **FOCUS: INTERVIEWING SKILLS: BROADCAST AND ONLINE**
No reading due.

3/18 Lab.

3/19 GUIDELINES FOR THIRD CONTENTS QUIZ ON 4/4 will be posted on SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS

3/21 FOCUS: DIGITAL MEDIA AND VISUAL JOURNALISM

Before class, read:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 13 (Skip pp. 277-282, from “Blogging and Digital Media” through “Microblogging”). Resume with “The Writing Coach” on bottom, p. 281 and read “The Reporter’s Guide,” p. 283.
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 14 (Skip p. 288-291). Resume with “The Digital News Package,” p. 291 to end of chapter.

In class: Emergency questions about article due tomorrow.

**3/22 DEADLINE: ARTICLE TWO DUE
RECEIVE MIDTERM GRADES**

NOTE: WITHDRAWAL DATE IS 3/28.

3/23 FOCUS: WRITING FEATURE STORIES

Before class: Read Bender, Chapter 17

In class: Talk about ARTICLE THREE, due 4/27, hard copy due in class.

3/24-3/28 EASTER BREAK/NO CLASS

3/28 DEADLINE FOR WITHDRAWING FROM CLASS WITHOUT THE PENALTY GRADE OF “WF”

3/30 FOCUS: WRITING SPECIALIZED STORIES AND OBITUARIES.

Before class:

- ✓ Read Bender, Chapter 16

4/1 Lab.

4/4 THIRD CONTENTS QUIZ

4/6 FOCUS: REPORTING ON CRIME AND ACCIDENTS

Before class: Read Chapter 18 to p. 373. Stop at “Local Government.”

4/8 FOCUS: LIBEL

Before class: Read Chapter 5 through p. 89. Stop at “Privacy.”

4/9 GUIDELINES FOR WRITING ARTICLE THREE WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI

4/11 FOCUS: LIBEL (CONT.)

4/12 STUDY GUIDE FOR FOURTH CONTENTS QUIZ WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI.

4/13 FOCUS: INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Before class: Read Bender, Chapter 19

In class: Begin “Murder in the Park.” Questions on this documentary will appear on your fourth contents quiz.

4/15 Lab. “Murder in the Park.” Questions on this documentary will appear on your fourth contents quiz.

4/20 NO READING. REWRITES OF LABS/OUTSIDE ARTICLES DUE. MUST BE IN HARD COPY FORMAT.

4/22 DEADLINE FOR ARTICLE THREE. 4/12 STUDY GUIDE FOR FOURTH CONTENTS QUIZ WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI.

MUST BRING IN HARD COPY TO CLASS.

Lab. “Murder in the Park.”

4/25 FOCUS: PRIVACY AND NEWSGATHERING ISSUES

Before class: Read Chapter 5 from bottom p. 89 through end of chapter.

4/27 NO READING. Continue discussion of 4/25 topics.
Optional AP Style quiz (for extra credit) will be given.

4/29 FOURTH CONTENTS QUIZ. NOTE: THERE IS NO FINAL IN THIS CLASS.

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