

Loyola University Chicago
COMM 205-22W
Reporting and Writing Across Platforms
Fall 2015
Tuesdays, Thursdays: 10-11:15 a.m.
Corboy Law Center, Room L14

Professor Tina Sfondeles
School of Communication
Phone: (312) 504-8965
Email: tina.sfondeles@gmail.com or ksfond1@luc.edu

Course description

Reporting and Writing is designed to teach students to report, write and create stories for print, broadcast and the Internet. While learning the basics through lectures and the textbook, students also will spend time doing research, interviews and writing print news stories, broadcast scripts, and articles for the Internet. Students will develop skills – learning how to conduct research, accurate note taking, writing with precision and clarity.

The goal of this course is to teach students the fundamentals of journalism, including developing news judgment, understanding ethical, legal and social justice issues, writing with objectivity and accuracy and telling a story in a compelling and organized manner. This will be accomplished by reading the textbook, through lectures, quizzes, writing assignments and by reading newspapers and course handouts.

This is a **Writing-Intensive Course**. Reporting and Writing involves a number of writing assignments. However, no writing assignment will be longer than 400 words. Students will be writing in class, in addition to outside writing assignments.

Required Materials

Inside Reporting by Tim Harrower

Associated Press Style Book

Students will periodically be required to bring the current day's *Chicago Sun-Times* or *Chicago Tribune* to class.

Additional Materials

In some cases, we'll be using our phones to take pictures and/or video.

Instructor Office Hours

I am only on campus during class hours but am always available before or after class and can be reached via email at any time.

Grading

Students will be expected to know material covered in lectures, the textbook, and major news stories in the daily newspapers, and this knowledge will be measured through outside writing assignments, in-class writing and editing exercises and news quizzes.

Total possible points for the semester: 1,000.

Assignments:

In-Class Assignments: 200 points (10 at 15 points each; 2 at 25 points)

Man on the Street Story: 100 points

Event story: 150 points

Statistics story: 100 points

Profile: 100 points

Radio News Story: 100 points

Final Television News Script Group Project: 150 points

Professionalism: 100 points

Grading Criteria for Written Work

A: Publishable work with no spelling, grammatical, punctuation or AP Style errors and the proper information and sources written in a lively, well-organized manner.

B: Minimal spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Minimal missing information and sources; minimal problems with the lead and organization.

C: Notable number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Noticeable missing information and sources; problems with the lead and organization.

D: Significant number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Significant missing information and sources; Significant problems with the lead and organization.

F: Misspelling of proper names. Other major spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Almost total lack of information and sources; Severe problems with the lead and organization.

Grading Criteria for Video Work:

A: Clearly focused video, proper framing, lively content, understandable audio, 1-3 minutes in length, properly posted to LSD YouTube site.

B-F: Varies depending upon how many of the above items are missing.

Rewrites

If the instructor determines that you need to rewrite the following Outside Assignments, you have one week to rewrite the story for a slightly improved grade: Man-on-the-Street, Event Story; Five Original Stories for Loyola Student Dispatch.

Deadlines

Deadlines are important in journalism, and you will be required to file assignments on time. Late assignments will drop one letter grade each day they are filed past deadline. The instructor does not accept assignments by e-mail without prior approval.

Individual Assignment Grade Scale

A: 100-94
A-: 93-90
B+: 89-88
B: 87-83
B-: 82-80
C+: 79-78
C: 77-73
C-: 72-70
D+: 69-68
D: 67-63
D-: 62-60
F: 59-0

Style and Spelling

It is important that you learn proper newspaper style, so refer often to your Associated Press Stylebook. Spelling and grammar are equally important. Your grade will suffer if your copy contains style and spelling errors.

Professionalism

This class is run like a newsroom, and you should treat it as if it were your job. Therefore, you will be expected to display a respectable level of professionalism by attending class regularly, arriving on time, being prepared for class, paying attention during lectures and participating in discussions. Texting and fiddling with the computer will not be tolerated. Frequent absences will result in a lower grade. Showing up on time also is crucial, since much material will be covered in lectures and writing labs. Tardiness will be taken into consideration when computing your final grade. If you're expecting to be absent or late, please call or email me **before** class, the same as if you had a job.

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>

Schedule

Week One

August 25, 27 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Learning AP style and ethics

Homework: AP style exercise

Week Two

Sept. 1, 3 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Writing straight news stories

Homework: Man on the Street Story

Week Three

Sept. 8, 10 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Research, quotations and interviewing

Deadline: Man on the Street Story Due Thursday, Sept. 10

Week Four

Sept. 15, 17 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Covering an event, press conferences, news releases

Homework: Event Story

Week Five

Sept. 22, 24 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Finding news, refining news, advancing news

Homework: Begin work on Loyola Student Dispatch

Deadline: Event Story Due Thursday, Sept. 24

Week Six

Sept. 29 (Visit to Media Ethics Conference), Oct. 1 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Covering a beat

Mid-semester break: No class Oct. 6

Week Seven

Oct. 13, 15 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Statistics

Week Eight

Oct. 20, 22 (in-class assignment)

Deadline: Stat Story Due Thursday, Oct. 22

Week Nine

Oct. 27, 29 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Understanding budgets

Week Ten

Nov. 3, 5 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Obituaries and Profiles

Week Eleven

Nov. 10, 12 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Writing for radio

Homework: Work on radio story

Deadline: Profile Due Thursday, Nov. 12

Week Twelve

Nov. 17, 19 (in-class assignment)

Lecture: Writing for radio

Homework: Work on radio story

Week Thirteen

Nov. 24, NO class on Nov. 26, Thanksgiving

Lecture: Writing for television

Deadline: Radio story due Monday, Nov. 24

Week Fourteen

Dec. 1, 3 (last class)

Homework: Group script writing project

Final Examination

Tuesday, Dec. 8, 1-3 p.m.

Presentation of Television News Script Group Project