

Jour 1345 -003 Writing for Mass Media (Fall 2011)

Instructor: Lael Morgan

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Office Hours: 9 -11:30 a.m.weekdays.

Phone or chat room conferences by appointment, and call any time in an emergency.

Course Blackboard: URL elearn.uta.edu

Texts: Writing for the Mass Media by James Glen Stovall; Publisher: Pearson Education Inc., 8th edition (2009), ISBN 13: 978-0-205-62784-4

“Associated Press Stylebook 2011” (An absolute *must!* Don't buy a book older than two years.)

“When Words Collide” by Kessler, Lauren and McDonald, Duncan (older edition OK).

Course Description: This is an introduction to the theories and techniques of research and writing for newspapers, public relations, broadcast, books, advertising and the Internet. Focus will be on news values, basic writing styles, interviewing, research and communication law.

Learning Goals and Objective: This prerequisite course will give you a sampling of several exciting professions and introduce you the fundamental skills required by them.

You will learn how to make your writing more readable and to use the Associated Press Stylebook, which is the basic style guide for the news industry. Upon completion, you should be able to write basic news and feature stories, press releases, broadcast and ad copy. In addition the course will help you:

- Comprehend the concepts, ideas and foundation of Freedom of Speech and Press, including an understanding of the role media play in today's society.
- Demonstrate an understanding of media law and ethics—specifically, truth, accuracy and fairness—as well as the role of diversity and interculturalism within sources and the newsroom.
- Conduct research while using ethical and legal principles to produce quality work.
- Understand the theories and principles of reporting and writing for media, including the presentation of information—images, graphics, visual communication and the written word.
- Be current with today's news and information disseminated through various media—both local and national.
- Utilize creative, critical and independent thinking to interview sources, conduct research and write unbiased media stories.
- Comprehend fundamental numerical and statistical concepts and utilize them in the writing and reporting of articles as well as being familiar with basic technology and software.

- Apply basic Associated Press style and utilize correct grammar when reporting and writing articles, as well as being comfortable with editing stories utilizing journalistic style, ethics and principles.
- Understand and be able to produce high quality journalistic stories, specifically news, feature and opinion-editorials, while working under deadlines.
- Critically evaluate your own work and the works of others utilizing the principles of accuracy, fairness, clarity, style and grammatical correctness.

Possible Bonus: If you do well in this course, you should also be able to find work in some of the professions it targets. *If, before this class ends, you can get a major news story or feature published or broadcast via professional media with a circulation or broadcast reach beyond 2,500, your grade will be raised one whole letter.* However this offer does not stand if you target media where you are already employed.

Course Grading:

- (1) Quizzes on AP style and grammar will count for 10 percent of your grade.
- (2) Numerous short writing assignments will count for 30 percent of your grade.
- (3) One public relations project will make up 15 percent of your grade.
- (4) One broadcast project will count for 10 percent of your grade.
- (5) Midterm feature writing assignments for 15 percent of your grade.
- (6) There will be two major exams. They will count for 20 percent of your grade.

Work turned in late without prior notice will have 20 points deducted from the final grade.

I will be glad to discuss first rough drafts with you, as would most editors. Points will be deducted for each A.P. style, spelling and grammatical error.

Grading will be based on 10 percent increments:

90 percent and above = A	80 percent to 89 percent = B
70 percent to 79 percent = C	60 to 69 percent = D

Professional standards will be used to grade writing assignments:

A if writing is publishable	B if work is publishable with a bit more effort
C if writing shows promise	D if work lacks effort and/or understanding

Absences: All make-up work from excused absences will be due within seven days. Made-up work from unexcused absences will be considered late. It must be turned in within a week and will be subject penalty. No assignments will be accepted after a week without prior agreement. Lateness in industry generally results in unemployment.

Jump Drive, CD or Floppy Disk: Be careful to save and back up your computer work as you go. The excuse that you lost everything because your computer failed will not be accepted.

Drop Policy: It is the responsibility of the student to process the official class drop and add forms. Faculty cannot drop students from class. Students need to go to his/her "major"

department to drop a class. (For example, if you are a HISTORY MAJOR, and you want to drop a MATH class, you need to go to the HISTORY DEPARTMENT to drop your class).

Americans with Disabilities Act: If you are a student who requires accommodations in compliance with the ADA, please consult with me at the beginning of the semester. As a faculty member, I am required by laws to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Your responsibility is to inform me of the disability at the beginning of the semester and provide me with documentation authorizing the specific accommodation. Student services at UTA include the Office for Students with Disabilities which is responsible for verifying and implementing accommodations to ensure equal opportunity in all programs and activities.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form at The University of Texas at Arlington. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

"Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2., Subdivision 3.22).

Student Support Services Available: The University supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. They include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

Bomb Threats: If anyone is tempted to call in a bomb threat, be aware the UTA will attempt to trace the phone call and prosecute all responsible parties. Every effort will be made to avoid cancellation of presentations/tests caused by bomb threats. Unannounced alternate sites will be available for these classes. Your instructor will make you aware of alternate class sites in the event that your classroom is not available.

Feel Free to Contact Me: When you phone or e-mail, please include your e-mail address or phone number and a time it would be convenient with you for a return call.

Format for Assignments: Save each assignment with your last name and the name of the assignment as the filename. For instance if I were to submit Crime Story I'd save the file as "MorganCrime." If you are not using Microsoft Word, and I have trouble opening your work, you may want to save your files as "Text Rich" or "Text only."

CALENDAR OF ASSIGNMENTS DUE

Session 1: Introduction and AP Style

Textbook Reading: Writing for Mass Media, Chapters 1-3

August 26 Job application*

Session 2: What is News?

Textbook Reading: Writing for Mass Media, Chapters 4,5 and 7

August 28 Story # 1 Inverted Pyramid Assignment

August 28 Editing Marks (Under Quiz Under Quizzes/Other Quizzes)

August 28 AP Test (Under Quizzes)

August 28 News Values Practice (In Course Content)

August 28 News Summary Leads Practice (In Course Content)

August 28 AP Test #1 (Under Quizzes)

September 4 Story #2 Crime

September 4 AP Test #2

September 11 Story # 3 Speech Story

September 11 AP Test #3

Session 3: Interviewing

Textbook Reading: Writing for Media Review Chapter 4

September 18 Feature Reaction Story

September 18 AP Test #4

Session 4: Feature Writing

Textbook Reading: Review Chapter 7

September 22 Feature Brainstorming Stories

September 25 Personality Profile

September 25 AP Quiz #5

*September 29 Feature Rough draft for midterm.*** It's not required but you can't rewrite this one. The final draft is due Oct. 9.*

October 9 Midterm Feature **

October 9 Midterm Exam**

Session 5: Research

Textbook Reading: None

October 2 Research Public Records/Library

October 2 AP Test #6

Session 6: Professional Writing

Textbook reading: Writing for Mass Media, 2. When Words Collide, Chapters 2,6 and 12

- October 16 **Readability Assignment**
- October 16 Grammar Test (Under Quizzes/Practice Exercises)
- October 16 Readability Practice 1(Book 4.3) (Under Quizzes/Practice)
- October 16 Readability Practice 2 (Book 4.4) (Under Quizzes/Practice)

Session 7: Web Writing and Utilization

Textbook Reading: Writing for Media, 10. The Associated Press Stylebook pp. 125-133

- October 23 Web Assignment (five sections)**
- October 23 AP Test #7

Session 8 Public Relations

Textbook Reading: Writing for Mass Media, Chapter 12

- October 30 PR#1 : Press Release**
- October 30 AP Test #8 A

November 3 PR#2 Press Kit**

*Read your assignment for the final press kit project which has a weighted grade.
Then submit by email the name and contact information of the person,
organization or business that you plan on doing your public relations campaign
for. The rough draft is due Nov. 24, the final draft is due Dec. 6.*

*November 24 Rough Draft of Press Kit Due.***
The final which will be due December 6.*

Session 9: Writing for Broadcast

Textbook Reading: Writing for Mass Media, Chapter 9.

- November 6 Broadcast 1 Radio News**
- November 6 AP Test #8B

- November 13 Broadcast 2 News Script**
- November 13 AP Test #9

Session 10: Advertising

Textbook Reading: Writing for Mass Media, Chapter 11

- November 20 Analyzing Ads**
- November 20 AP Quiz #10

Session 11: Law and Ethics

Textbook Reading: Writing for Mass Media, Chapter 13

November 27 Ethics Discussion (See Section 12, Making Ethical Decisions)

November 27 Law Quiz (Under Other Quizzes)

November 27 Trade Mark Practice (See Section 12, Intellectual Property Law)

Session 12: Work Habits and Finding Work

Textbook Reading: Writing for Mass Media, Chapter 14

December 4 Work Habits (4 sections)

December 4 AP Quiz #11

December 6 Final: Press Kit Due.

December 12 Final Exam

***Assignments in bold are under Written Assignments.**

****Underlined assignments have weighted grades.**

*****Grades given rough drafts do not go on your final record. They are just to give you an idea what you might get on the assignment if you follow editorial suggestions.**