

NEWS WRITING (ENGLISH 207)
ALLEGHENY COLLEGE
FALL 2010
M/W/F 9-9:50 A.M. MURRAY 117

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COURSE OUTLINE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND POLICIES

Course Objectives. This course will teach you the fundamentals of writing clear, concise and accurate stories. Using a lecture and laboratory setting, News Writing will give you the tools necessary to report and write stories in a timely and efficient manner. You will learn proper journalism style, ethical conduct and effective news consumption. We will address the following course objectives:

- Utilize AP Style, spelling and grammar
- Identify the news values of a story
- Recall the general organization of a news outlet (print, broadcast, online)
- Write short news stories with accuracy, clarity and completeness
- Evaluate a series of facts, identify the key elements and write a concise summary lede
- Introduce the basics of media law and media ethics
- Understand the importance of quotes and sources
- Develop an awareness of current events
- Apply the basic techniques of news gathering to collect and verify facts necessary to write a news story by an assigned deadline
- Attend an event and write a publishable story
- Find a unique writing voice in the news style
- Experiment with and understand the basic differences of telling a story in print, broadcast and online media

Course Materials. We will be using *Writing and Reporting News* by Carole Rich to augment the work we do in this course. You will also need the *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (2009 or 2010 editions are acceptable, as is the digital edition). You should bring your texts to each class. You will also receive periodic handouts in class and via email and you can expect to see this material on your exams and quizzes. You may find it helpful to have a flash drive, reporter's notepad, a reliable pen and possibly a voice recorder on hand during class and for your out-of-class reporting assignments.

Deadlines. Journalism is a deadline-oriented business. As a professional, if you miss a deadline, you should expect to clear out your desk sooner rather than later. As a student in this course, I will hold you to a similar standard. Meeting deadlines in this course is mandatory. If you don't turn in an assignment on time, you will NOT receive credit. Zero. Nada. Zilch. By meeting this course standard you will inevitably grow not only as a journalist, but also as a person.

Attendance. Please come to class on time every scheduled class day. If you miss a class, you will miss in-class participation points and quizzes, which you cannot make up. If there is a circumstance above and beyond your control that may force you to miss class, please email me or see me so we can discuss your alternatives. If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to get notes from classmates.

Electronic Devices. You will quickly discover that cell phones and unapproved computer use in class are my biggest pet peeves. If I see you fiddling with your phone, I will ask you to leave the classroom. I will find this course to be infinitely more rewarding if you are “present” both physically and mentally.

Email. Many course materials will be distributed to you via email. You are responsible for checking your email on a daily basis.

Participation. Successful people, especially journalists, know how to ask questions – lots of questions. Come to every class prepared to participate in our discussions. Those who refuse to be a part of the discussion will see that reflected in a lower final grade. Please note that there is a difference between quality of participation and quantity of participation.

Course Writing Guidelines. Any assignment that you turn in must be typed, stapled, double-spaced and physically handed in to me during class on the day it is due. (Unless I’ve asked you to do otherwise.) This allows me to mark up the physical copy and return it to you. All assignments should conform to AP Style and be free of spelling, grammar or style mistakes. I do not accept late assignments. If you foresee a problem completing an assignment, tell me PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE.

Quizzes and Tests. You will have 10 unannounced quizzes in this course that will cover any reading due that day and current events from the *Meadville Tribune*, *The New York Times*, *LA Times* and *CNN*. We will have a practice quiz during the first week of class so you know what to expect. To do well on these quizzes, you should keep up with the assigned course reading as outlined in the syllabus. If you arrive late to class, please do not expect me to repeat quiz questions – it is your responsibility to be on time.

Accuracy. Any assignment turned in that misspells a person’s name, has an inconsistent spelling of a person’s name, a major factual error, an inexact quotation or fictional quotes will receive a zero for the assignment.

A Disclaimer. This syllabus and the due dates contained therein may (and probably will) change as we progress through the semester. I will announce any changes well in advance.

Disabilities. Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Services at (814) 332-2898. Disability Services is part of the Learning Commons and is located in Pelletier Library. Please do this as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Grades: Your course grade is calculated out of 500 total points and will be decided as follows:
100 pts One reported article
100 pts Two tests
100 pts Ten quizzes
200 pts Participation, activities, homework

Grades are determined on the following solid percentage scale:

A 90-100%
B 80-89%
C 70-79%
D 60-69%
F 0-59%

CLASS SCHEDULE (ASSIGNMENTS/READING DUE ON MONDAY)

WEEK 1 (8/30) What is journalism?; AP style; Ledes; Read Ch. 1, 3

WEEK 2 (9/6) Quiz #1; AP Style continued; Ledes continued; News values; Read Ch. 8

WEEK 3 (9/13) Quiz #2; AP Style continued; Story organization; Obits; Read. Ch. 9-10, 18

WEEK 4 (9/20) Quiz #3; Story ideas; Sources; Research; Interviewing; Read Ch. 5-7

WEEK 5 (9/27) Quiz #4; Legal and ethical issues; Read Ch. 15-17

WEEK 6 (10/4) Legal and ethical issues continued; *Midterm Exam on Oct. 8*

WEEK 7 (10/11) *No class 10/11 for Fall Break*; Feature and special reporting; Read Ch. 11, 23

WEEK 8 (10/18) Quiz #5; Speeches, meetings and sports; Read Ch. 20 *Game at 4 p.m. 10/19*

WEEK 9 (10/25) Quiz #6; Speeches, meetings, sports continued; Budget meeting

WEEK 10 (11/1) Quiz #7; Beat reporting; Read Ch. 19, 21-22

WEEK 11 (11/8) Quiz #8; Online journalism; Read Ch. 2, 4, 13

WEEK 12 (11/15) Quiz #9; Broadcast journalism, Read Ch. 12

WEEK 13 (11/22) *No class on 11/24 or 11/26 due to Thanksgiving Break*; Broadcast continued

WEEK 14 (11/29) Quiz #10; Group and individual reported article work

WEEK 15 (12/6) Reported articles due; Presentations; FINAL EXAM (12/11) 9 a.m. (Group A)