

Reporting Basics I: Writing and Interviewing

COMM 205-21W (2864)

FALL 2018

Tuesdays/Thursdays 10-11:15 a.m.

School of Communications Room 003

Course Description: Students will learn the fundamentals of journalistic-style reporting and writing. They'll also learn the basics of working in a newsroom, including newsgathering, sourcing, interviewing and working on deadline. There will be many writing assignments and style/grammar quizzes. We'll also have quizzes on the news of the day, so reading/watching/listening to credible news sources on a daily basis is strongly encouraged. Highly recommend a daily newspaper or newspaper website to get a feel for the rhythm and flow of how stories are put together. There also are free copies of newspapers to browse in the lobby of the School of Communication, and your enrollment at Loyola gets you a free subscription to the New York Times.

Instructor contact information:

Eric Krol

312-222-3385 (work)

312-699-0627 (cell)

Email: ekroll1@luc.edu (yes, they added an extra “1,” to it...it’s a typo)

Office hours: By appointment or we can talk before/after class.

Required texts and materials:

1. “Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism,” third edition. By Tim Harrower.

2. Associated Press Stylebook. (Online version recommended over the hard copy version. You'll be using it to look up concepts/words, and I've found that students tend to like the online version better. It's more intuitive to use (there's a search box.) Believe it's \$26 for a year's access.

The link: <https://store.stylebooks.com/apstylebookonline.html>

3. Local and national newspapers to keep up with current events (online reading is OK). I think you already get free NYT online subscriptions with your enrollment at Loyola or maybe it's just the School of Communication? Also a good idea to read the Loyola weekly student newspaper (The Phoenix).

Grading: You will take quizzes on your basic knowledge of AP Style — which is the spelling, grammar and punctuation used in newsrooms.

You are expected to apply this style to your writing assignments. More on those later.

You will produce a 100-word analysis of the readings in Harrower. Please write a thoughtful reaction to the readings. What surprised you? What did you find relevant to your own life? Let's not just do an elementary summary that simply skims the highlights of the material.

You also are expected to keep abreast of the news. Read the Chicago Tribune or Chicago Sun-Times for local news and the New York Times or USA Today for national news. Our classroom discussions will often touch on the news of the moment, and there will be current events quizzes for extra credit.

Students are expected to act in a professional way as if this were a job. That means attending class regularly, arriving on time, being prepared for class and participating in lectures.

Surfing the web or checking your email and Instagram won't get you very far in this class. Tardiness is a factor in determining your final grade. If you expect to be absent or late, please call or email me — just like you would your editor.

Grading criteria for written work:

A: Publishable work with no spelling, grammatical, punctuation or AP Style errors. The work must be well organized and display the “five Ws” of news writing. Multiple sources and proper attribution are important.

B: Minimal spelling, grammatical, punctuation and AP Style errors; minimal missing information and source information; and minimal problems with the ‘lede’ (the first paragraph) and organization.

C: Notable number of the above errors.

D: Significant problems with the story.

F: Misspelled proper names; other major spelling, grammatical, punctuation and AP Style errors; an almost total lack of information and sources; and severe problems with the lede and organization.

Total possible points for the semester: 950

- * (80) In-class AP style and grammar quizzes
- * (20) In-class profile exercise
- * (100) Brief summaries of readings from “Inside Reporting” (Max of 20 points per summary x five summaries)
- * (100) Campus or city event story
- * (100) Man/Woman on the Street story
- * (100) Politics story
- * (100) Profile story
- * (100) Police story
- * (200) Final exam: Deadline writing
- * (50) Attendance/participation: You lose five points for each class you miss. You’ll lose points if you’re chronically distracted by your phone and not paying attention/participating.

Format: For the brief summaries of “Inside Reporting” chapters, you can turn in a printed copy at class. For the writing assignments, please **email** me Word documents in Times New Roman (that’s the font used in

this syllabus), 12-point, in paragraph form with name, date, name of assignment and word count in the top right corner.

Deadlines: Late assignments will drop one letter grade each day they are filed past deadline. No in-class work may be completed out of class due to an absence unless the instructor excuses the absence.

Rewrites: If a student receives a grade of 73 or less, she or he may rewrite the following assignments: Campus or city event story, Man/Woman on the Street story, as well as police, politics, profile stories. You will have one week to submit the rewrite. The average of the two scores — the original and the rewrite — will be used to calculate the final grade for the assignment.

Extra credit: You can earn up to 30 points in extra credit. We'll do current events quizzes most weeks, usually on Thursdays. There are likely to be three questions a week for 10 weeks throughout the semester. No make-ups.

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

Academic dishonesty policy (from the School of Communication Faculty Teaching Handbook, August 2017 edition)

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents.

Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. 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. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. 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.

The office of the Dean of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is

confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

(The School of Communication policy is based entirely on and is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy of the College of Arts & Sciences.)

Class meeting schedule:

(Subject to change, and I'll tell you about any changes via email)

WEEK 1

Aug. 28: Intro to class and each other/go over the various parts of a newspaper/newspaper web site.

Aug. 30: Discuss Ch. 1 and 2.

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WEEK 2

Sept. 4: Intro to the AP stylebook.

--- Abbreviations/Acronyms Quiz 1

Sept. 6: Intro to AP stylebook continues.

--- Capitalization Quiz 2

--- Start-of-class assessment that's required for COMM 205. Does not count toward your grade, but helps the department with accreditation.

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WEEK 3

Sept. 11: The 5Ws and the H discussion/Writing the Inverted Pyramid style. With in-class exercise.

--- What's Due: *Ch. 3 summary*.

Sept. 13: How to write leads/identify what the news is, with in-class exercise.

--- Current Events Quiz #1 for extra credit.

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WEEK 4

Sept. 18: The rhythm of a news story/what's next after the lead/alternate leads (anecdotal).

--- AP Stylebook Numerals/Quiz 3.

--- What's Due: *Ch. 4 summary*.

Sept. 20: How to do attribution/use quotes/set up quotes, with in-class examples.

--- Punctuation/Quiz 4.

--- Current Events Quiz #2 for extra credit.

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WEEK 5

Sept. 25: How to do interviews, with in-class exercise.

--- Subject-Verb Agreement Instruction/Quiz 5.

Sept. 27: Man/Woman on the Street writing assignment assigned.

--- Plurals and Possessives Instruction/Quiz 6.

--- Current Events Quiz #3 for extra credit.

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WEEK 6

Oct. 2: Event story assigned. How to write event story with examples from last class. How to cover speeches/meetings. How to find events, etc.

--- What's Due: Ch. 5 Summary.

--- Pronouns Instruction/Quiz 7.

Oct. 4: How to self-edit. (With in-class exercise, showing how to check for spelling/AP style, whether the sentences make sense, etc.)

--- What's Due: *Man/Woman On The Street* assignment

--- Current Events Quiz #4 for extra credit.

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WEEK 7

Oct. 9: FALL BREAK/NO CLASS

Oct. 11: Covering other types of stories. Overview discussion on Ch. 6 (Beyond Breaking News) w/in-class exercise or discussion. What's a feature story/they're found in every section.

--- What's due: *Ch. 6 summary.*

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WEEK 8

Oct. 16: How to write a profile lecture/profile assignment instructions.

--- Grammar Quiz 8.

Oct. 18: In-class exercise writing a profile of fellow student. Worth 20 points.

--- What's due: Event story.

--- Current Events Quiz #5 for extra credit.

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WEEK 9

Oct. 23: Work on profile assignment in class.

Oct. 25: Investigative reporting guest speaker.

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WEEK 10

Oct. 30: How to cover politics/writing about government/budgets/percentage increases/etc.

--- What's due: *Profile story due*.

--- Grammar Quiz 8.

Nov. 1: Mock presser for politics story/politics story assigned

--- Current Events Quiz #6 for extra credit.

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WEEK 11

Nov. 6: Libel lecture Ch. 7 in-class exercise (pull it or print it)

--- What's due: *Ch. 7 summary*.

--- Current Events Quiz #7 for extra credit.

Nov. 8: Ch. 8 Digital Journalism with in-class exercise. Writing for web?

--- *Politics story due.*

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WEEK 12

Nov. 13: Ch. 9 Broadcast Writing, with in-class exercise.

--- Current Events Quiz #8 for extra credit.

Nov. 15: Field trip to a newsroom.

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WEEK 13

Nov. 20: No class will be held.

Nov. 22: THANKSGIVING/NO CLASS

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WEEK 14

Nov. 27: Assign police story. Give the set of facts. How to cover crime/mayhem lecture.

Nov. 29: Possible police reporting guest speaker. End-of-class assessment that's required for COMM 205. Does not count toward your grade, but helps the department with accreditation.

--- Current Events Quiz #9 for extra credit.

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WEEK 15

Dec. 4: Practice deadline writing/in-class exercise.

---What's due: Police story.

Dec. 6: Practice deadline writing/go over in-class exercise.

Current Events Quiz #10 for extra credit.

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WEEK 16

Dec. 11: FINAL EXAM: 1-3 p.m.

DEADLINE WRITING web brief and final story. 200 points.

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