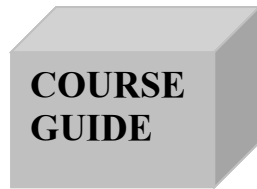




**JLS 725**

**EDITORIAL  
WRITING**

**Course Guide**



**JLS725**  
**EDITORIAL WRITING**

Course Developer/ Writer

Andrew Asan Ate.  
Igbinedion University, Okada,  
Benin City.

Course Editor

Mr Oloruntola Sunday.  
Department of Mass Communication,  
University of Lagos,  
Akoka.

Course Coordinator

Chidinma H. Onwubere  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Victoria Island, Lagos.

Programme Leader

Christine I. Ofulue Ph.D  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Victoria Island, Lagos.



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island  
Lagos

Abuja Office  
National Open University of Nigeria  
5, Dar Es Salaam Street,  
Off Aminu Kano Crescent  
Wuse 11  
Abuja, Nigeria.

e-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)  
URL: [www.nou.edu.ng](http://www.nou.edu.ng)

Published by:  
National Open University of Nigeria 2008

First Printed 2008

ISBN: 978-058-748-9

All Rights Reserved

<b>TABLE OF CONTENT</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Introduction .....	1
What You Will Learn in this Course .....	1-2
Course Aims .....	2
Course Objectives .....	2
Working Through This Course .....	2
Course Materials.....	2-3
Study Units.....	4
Assignment File .....	4
Presentation Schedule .....	4
Assessment .....	4-5
Tutor - Marked Assignments .....	5
Final Examination and Grading .....	5
Course Marking Scheme .....	5
Course Overview .....	6
How To Get The Most From This Course .....	6-8
Tutors and Tutorials .....	8-9
Summary .....	9

## **Introduction**

**JLS 725** is a one-semester two credit units course. It is designed to drill Journalism or Mass Communication students on the theory and practice of editorial writing.

The course will also highlight the opinion functions of editorials and columns in modern newspapers. It is developed for Nigerian students with typical examples from the Nigerian environment.

The course takes into account the professional and academic needs of students offering M.A/M.Sc degrees in Journalism and Mass Communication.

The course has a guide which serves as a compass towards effective use of the course materials as contained in the course units. There is also provision for tutor-marked assignments which should not be handled with levity by students.

## **What You Will Learn in this Course**

The overall aim of JLS725: Editorial Writing, is to expose students to the basic concepts in opinion writing both from the corporate and individualistic point of view.

The meaning, structure, types and functions of editorial would be examined along with creative essentials of editorial writing. The course will also assist students to appreciate the major differences between an editorial and other forms of writing. Your understanding of Editorial Writing will prepare you to tackle the challenges that go with analysis and interpretation of issues of public concern.

The course will professionally provoke the students' hunger for critical thinking and writing in line with the concept of editorial writing. It will equip the students to have a better understanding of the power of public opinion and how to use same for editorial purposes.

The course will also nurture the students to understand the agenda-setting functions of the press and appreciate the power of information in the market place of ideas. Such understanding will enable the students to know why the mass media is often referred to as the court of public opinion.

A thorough exposure to the contents of this course will also empower the students in writing effective broadcast commentaries.

## **Course Aims**

The major aim of this course is to sharpen the intellectual horizon of students and expose them to the general principles and practices of in-depth or interpretative writing.

The course also aimed at drilling students in the art and science of columns and opinion writing from corporate and individual perspectives.

## **Course Objectives**

The course is designed to achieve the following objectives at its completion:

- Thoroughly educate students to appreciate the agenda-setting role of the press by initiating public debates and measuring the effects of such debates in the market place of ideas.
- Educate students on the types, determinants, audience and persuasive techniques of editorials.

## **Working Through This Course**

To effectively harness and retain the rich information in this course, the student is expected to read the recommended texts and other materials provided by the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

The self assessment exercise spelt out in each unit must be taken seriously. Students are, expected from time to time to submit assignments for onward and periodic assessment. There will be an examination at the end of this course. Stated below are the components of the course and what you ought to do.

## **Course Materials**

Major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment File
5. Presentation.

In addition, you must obtain your own copies of the materials. They are provided by NOUN. In some cases, you may be required to obtain your

copy from the bookshop. In case you have any problem in obtaining your materials, you may contact your tutor.

### **Study Units**

There are eleven study units in this course. These are:

#### **Module 1**

- Unit 1           Meaning of Editorials and Qualities of Editorials
- Unit 2           Public Opinion and Editorial
- Unit 3           Editorials and other forms of Writing

#### **Module 2**

- Unit 1           Sourcing the Editorial Materials
- Unit 2           Editorial Audience and Qualities of Editorial Writers
- Unit 3           Editorial Board
- Unit 4           Techniques in Editorial Writing

#### **Module 3**

- Unit 1           Determinants of Editorial Subject
- Unit 2           Classification of Editorials
- Unit 3           Structure of an Editorial and Pitfalls in Editorial Writing
- Unit 4           Ethics of Editorial Writing

Each unit is accompanied by a number of self-tests which are drawn from the materials the student has already gone through. The tests are intentionally designed to keep the student abreast of what he/she has studied from the course materials. If properly utilized, the excellent combination of self-tests with tutor-marked assignments will in no small measure lead to the achievement of the holistic objectives of the course.

### **Set Textbooks**

The students should endeavour to get the following text books:

Ukonu, M (2005). *Fundamentals of Editorial Writing*. Nsukka: Multi Educational and Services Trust.

Okoro, N. and B. Agbo (2003). *Writing For the Media Society*. Nsukka: Prize Publishers.

Duyile, D (2005). *Writing For The Media – A Manual For African Journalists*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lagos: Gong Communication.

Anderson, D. and B. Pater (1976). *Investigative Reporting*. London and Bloomington: University Press.

Anim, E (1996). *Editorial Writing*. Port-Harcourt: Sunray Books.

Rystrom, K (1994). *The Why, Who and How of the Editorial Page*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Pennsylvania: Strata Publishing Company.

### **Assignment File**

In the Assignment File, you will get the details of the work you are expected to submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtained in these assignments will count towards your total mark in this course. Further information on the assignment would be found in the Assessment File itself and later in this course guide in the section on 'Assessment'.

### **Presentation Schedule**

The presentation schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor-marked assignments and attending tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments by the due dates. You should guard against falling behind your work.

### **Assessment**

There are two aspects to the assessment of the course. First is the tutor-marked assignments; second, there is a written examination.

In tackling the assignments, you are expected to apply information and knowledge acquired during this course.

The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the Assignment File. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will count for 30% of your total course mark.

At the end of the course, you will need to sit for a final three-hour examination. This will also count for 70% of your total course mark.



## Tutor - Marked Assignments

There are fifteen tutor-marked assignments in this course. You need to submit all the assignments. The best four (i.e. the highest four of the fifteen marks) will be counted. The total marks for the best four (4) assignments will be 30% of your total course mark.

Assignment questions for the units in this course are contained in the Assignment File. You should be able to complete your assignments from the information and materials contained in your set textbooks, reading and study units. However, you are advised to use other references to broaden your viewpoint and provide a deeper understanding of the subject.

When you have completed each assignment, send it, together with TMA (Tutor-Marked Assignment) form to your tutor. Make sure that each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline given in the Assignment File. If, however, you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor before the assignment is due to discuss the possibility of an extension.

## Final Examination and Grading

The final examination of JLS725 will be three hours' duration and have a value of 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the type of self-testing, practice exercises and tutor-marked problems you have come across. All areas of the course will be assessed.

You are advised to revise the entire course after studying the last unit before you sit for the examination. You will find it useful to review your tutor-marked assignments and the comments of your tutor on them before the final examination.

## Course Marking Scheme

This table shows how the actual course is broken down.

Assessment	Marks
Assignments 1-15	15 assignments, best five marks of twenty count @10% (on the averages) = 50% of course marks
Final Examination	50% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

Table 1: Course Marking Scheme

## Course Overview

This table brings together the units, the number of weeks you should take to complete them, and the assignments that follow them.

Unit	Title of work	Week's Activity	Assessment (end of unit)
	Course Guide	1	
1.	Meaning of Editorial	1	Assessment 1
b.	Qualities of Good Editorial Writers	2	Assessment 2
2.	Public Opinion and Editorials	3	Assessment 3
3.	Editorial and other forms of Writing	4	Assessment 4
b.	Types of Editorials	5	Assessment 5
4	Sourcing the Editorial Materials	6	Assessment 6
5	Editorial Audience	7	Assessment 7
b	Qualities of Editorial Writers	8	Assessment 8
6	Editorial Board	9	Assessment 9
7	Techniques in Editorial Writing	10	Assessment 10
8.	Determinants of Editorial Subjects	11	Assessment 11
9.	Classification of Editorial	12	Assessment 12
10.	Structure of an Editorial	13	Assessment 13
b.	Pitfalls of Editorial Writing	14	Assessment 14
11	Ethics of Editorial Writing	15	Assessment 15
12	Revision	16	
13	Examination	17	

Table 2: Course Overview

## How to Get the Most from this Course

In distance learning the study units replace the university lecturer. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning. You can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to a lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read your set books or other materials. Just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate points.

Each of the study unit follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use

these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the units you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course.

The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from other materials.

## **Reading Section**

Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly
2. Organize a study schedule. Refer to the 'Course Overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Whatever method you chose to use, you should fashion out your own convenient schedule for working on each unit.
3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
4. Turn to Unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
5. Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the 'Overview' at the beginning of each unit. You will almost always need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.
6. Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.
7. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your tutor.
8. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the

course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.

9. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment form and also on what is written on the assignment. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.
10. After completing the unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this Course Guide).

## **Tutors and Tutorials**

There are eight hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter and provide assistance to you during the course. You must mail your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible.

Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail, or discussion board if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary.

Contact your tutor if:

- You do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings,
- You have difficulty with the self-tests or exercises,
- You have a question or problem with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face to face contact with tutor and to ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course

tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from actively participating in discussions.

## **Summary**

JLS725 is packaged to introduce you to the basic concepts and principles of Editorial Writing. Upon the completion of the course, you will be able to answer the following questions among others:

- What is the meaning of Editorial?
- What are the qualities of a good Editorial writer?
- What are the types and functions of Editorials?
- What persuasive and propaganda techniques can one use in Editorial Writing?
- Where can you source for Editorial materials and who are the Editorial Audience?
- How can editorials be classified and what are the key issues or concepts in editorial Writing?
- What determines an Editorial subject and what are the dos and don'ts of Editorial Writing?
- What are the Ethics of Editorials?