

J317 JOURNALISM PRACTICES

Summer 2020

School of Journalism
University of Texas at Austin

Timeline: June 4-July 9, with recorded lectures from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Central. See course calendar below for live lecture days.

Instructor: Mallery Tenore

Zoom office hours: Any weekday, by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course teaches you how to be a more effective communicator by teaching you how to think, report, and write like a journalist. Although the course emphasizes journalistic newsgathering and writing, the skills are crucial to success in public relations as well as many other disciplines. You will learn the core skills of news judgement and ethics, basic reporting, news writing, interviewing, and covering a diverse array of stories.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, J317 students will:

1. Understand the connections and differences between journalism and PR, and why it matters.
2. Recognize the difference between hard news and news features.
3. Evaluate the information gathered to choose what's newsworthy, relevant and important.
4. Identify and find credible and diverse sources.
5. Conduct meaningful interviews, including asking smart questions.
6. Verify information from the internet, documents and interviews.
7. Incorporate current and historical events and information into reporting and writing for necessary context.
8. Produce newsworthy stories through original reporting and writing.
9. Write clear, well organized, interesting news stories that adhere to AP style.
10. Incorporate revision and editing to rid copy of factual and grammatical errors as well as redundancies, clichés and ambiguities.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN J317

Read news. Reading news stories will help you learn about reporting and writing – including how to structure stories, how to write strong leads, how to effectively use quotes, AP style, and more. Find a couple of writers whose work you really admire and then follow them on Twitter and on the sites where their work is published. These writers can act as a source of inspiration.

Be curious. Being curious leads to better stories, better reporting and more fun! If something or someone interests you, seek more information. Often, the details and questions that pique your curiosity are the seeds of stories that you should pursue. Cultivate that curiosity.

Seek feedback from your professor. Especially during this time of remote learning, it's important to reach out to your professor for feedback on your stories and/or if you have any questions about assignments, quizzes, etc. If you don't understand something, seek clarification.

Keep up with the recorded lectures day to day. Create a game-plan for keeping up with the recorded lectures. Don't wait until Friday of each week to watch them. Instead, watch them each day so that you can stay connected. Each lecture will build off the next, so it's critical that you watch the recorded lectures leading up to the live lectures.

Seek assistance. The **Moody Writing Support Program** is more than a writing aid – the program helps students understand what makes a good story and how to pursue it. The program's robust journalism coaching is an asset for J317 students and designed to help them excel in the course.

That's why you are required to take your stories there for consultation with a writing coach.

Summer hours are Monday through Friday from 10:30 a.m.- 3 p.m. or by appointment. Visit

<http://sites.utexas.edu/moodywriting/journalism/>

to book your appointments. If you cannot find something that fits your schedule, email moodywriting@austin.utexas.edu.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Read, listen and watch the news on various platforms: digital, hard copy newspapers, radio and television. Sign up for news alerts and follow established news media outlets on social media. The following materials are required:

- ONLINE subscription to The Associated Press Stylebook, www.apstylebook.com
- All information on Canvas, as well as class handouts.
- As a UT student, you have access to the digital Austin American-Statesman. Read it every morning so that you can stay abreast of day to day news. Log in here:
<http://nieonline.com/austin/studentconnect.cfm>

User name: utjourn0

Password: utjourn0

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Core components of this course are the writing assignments, complemented by the Take 10 assignments and the quizzes. Story assignments are to be completed outside of class, but each assignment will be discussed during lectures. Assignments may be added or dropped as needed.

GRADING

Your work is evaluated based on professional standards, including newsworthiness, research and original reporting, story structure, and mechanics (grammar, spelling and punctuation, and AP Style). Grading rubrics will be posted on Canvas. The instructor may use plus and minus grades, following this range:

A: 94-100

A-minus: 90-93.99

B-plus: 87-89.99

B: 84-86.99

B-minus: 80-83.99

C-plus: 77-77.99

C: 74-76.99

C-minus: 70-73.99

D: 60-69.99

F: 59 and lower

Grading Breakdown

- **65%: Story assignments.** You will complete three stories, described in greater detail under the “Story Assignments” section.
- **15%: Participation.** Attending and participating in the live lectures is critical. Meeting with and/or reaching out to Professor Tenore to ask questions and seek feedback on assignments also contributes to your participation grade.
- **10%: Quizzes.** Four quizzes will test your knowledge of AP Style.
- **10%: Take 10 assignments:** This weekly assignment will give you the opportunity to recap and reflect on what you’ve learned each week. You’ll be asked to write 10 bulleted takeaways (two to three sentences each) from both the recorded and live lectures each week.

STORY ASSIGNMENTS

During this class, you will write three stories. The following is a brief description of each.

Story 1: Online event story (20%). You’ll watch a recent Webinar and report on it. You should quote at least two people who spoke in the Webinar and do two interviews: one with someone who helped organize the Webinar and one with an expert on the topic discussed in the Webinar. (600 to 800 words)

Story 2: Profile piece (20%). You will be given the names of reputable journalists and each student in the class can sign up to interview one of these journalists. You’ll interview the journalist and write a profile piece, with a focus on their work as a journalist and how, if at all, it has changed during the pandemic. (600 to 800 words)

Story 3: Feature story (25%). You will write a reported feature story OR a well-sourced personal essay related to a topic that interests you. The feature story should include at least three interviews and the personal essay should include at least three sources from reputable sites. (750 to 1,000 words)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT STORY ASSIGNMENTS

- You will be required to pitch your story ideas prior to pursuing each of these stories. A form is available in Canvas for you to fill out and submit on or before the deadline indicated in the course calendar.
- All stories are submitted as Canvas assignments via a Word doc file (.doc or .docx) or .pages. Please do not submit .pdf file types or Google Docs links.
- Put a working headline and byline on every draft and story. Failure to do so is considered a reporting hole (missing information that diminishes a story) and will cost you points.
- Avoid conflicts of interest in which you have a vested interest in the people, groups, events or organizations that you might cover – and what could be perceived as conflicts of interest. Do not pitch stories that potentially contain a conflict of interest (unless an exception is noted). Potential conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to) friends, family members, and roommates. *When in doubt about a potential conflict of interest, ask Professor Tenore as soon as possible.*
- Graded story assignments must be accompanied with a cover sheet (template is on Canvas). Failure to include a cover sheet is considered a reporting hole and will cost you points. The cover sheet includes:
 - Your name, the story assignment and the date
 - Story slug (one- or two-word description used by newsrooms to distinguish stories)
 - The “budget line” or a one- or two-sentence description of the story

- A list of names of sources you interviewed (quoted and unquoted), phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses

Late Work: Deadlines are *critical* in journalism. Don't miss them. Late stories will automatically be docked at least one letter grade.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required and will be taken. Live lectures (which are noted in the course calendar) will begin promptly at 11 a.m. Central. Attendance includes arriving to live lectures on time and staying for the entire lecture. Attendance points cannot be made up at another time. If you cannot attend a live lecture, you must communicate this to Professor Tenore at least one week prior to the lecture. Attendance will be assessed based on your presence and active participation in live lectures, along with your willingness to seek input from your professor outside of class.

TECHNOLOGY

Canvas: This web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://canvas.utexas.edu/> —is used to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and for online quizzes and surveys. ***It is required for this course.*** You can see Canvas tutorials here: <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/student-tutorials>

Zoom: Zoom is required for this course, as all recorded and live lectures will be done via Zoom. To successfully access the Zoom lectures, you need to claim your free UT Zoom account by going to utexas.zoom.us and registering. This is done by clicking on *Sign In*. You cannot use any other Zoom account to access this class. Per UT's Zoom security settings, you must also download and register the Zoom app on all your devices (including computers). The Zoom app is available in the Apple App Store and in the Google Play store for Android. The desktop app can be downloaded at utexas.zoom.us by following the *Download Client* link at bottom of the opening screen, and then downloading *Zoom Client for Meetings*.

Here is the link where you can access all live lectures for this course:

<https://utexas.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0pc-ihpjgpG9Bo7ep-q3accJITi0TAOMP> (Meeting ID 994-419-83314). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Using Email for Official Correspondence: Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible for keeping the university informed about changes to your email address. You should check your email regularly and frequently—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Slack: The class will have its own Slack workspace as a place where students can converse with one another and/or the professor. The Slack workspace is intended to be an informal mode of communication and a way to stay connected in this online class. Students are encouraged, but not required, to join the workspace. Any important class-related information that the professor shares on Slack will first be shared on Canvas.

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness and respect toward peers and community.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate UT rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from UT. For details see:
http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: In regard to journalism and J317, academic dishonesty includes:

- Plagiarizing or using another media source's, individual's or your own (in part or in whole) work and representing it as new for this class. If you've done or started the work in another class, you must inform your instructor before pitching the story.
- Pitching or turning in an assignment from a previous class without instructor permission.
- Making up quotes, sources and facts.
- Not interviewing people who appear in your stories.
- Not giving appropriate attribution or citation of a source or background information. In this class, you will learn how to properly attribute information.
- Cheating during a quiz or any assignment, graded or not

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

The university has numerous resources to aid and support students. Use these to help you succeed in your classes and life.

Counseling and Mental Health Services: Taking care of your general well-being is an important step in being a successful student. If stress, test anxiety, racing thoughts, feeling unmotivated or anything else is getting in your way, there are options available for support. For **immediate** support:

- Contact the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) at 512-471-3515 | cmhc.utexas.edu
- CMHC Crisis Line: 24/7 | [512-471-2255](tel:512-471-2255) | cmhc.utexas.edu/24hourcounseling.html

CARE Counselor in the Moody College of Communication is: Abby Simpson, LCSW | [512-471-7642](tel:512-471-7642)
(Please *leave a message* if she is unavailable.)

FREE Services at CMHC:

- Brief assessments and referral services
- Mental health & wellness articles - cmhc.utexas.edu/commonconcerns.html
- MindBody Lab - cmhc.utexas.edu/mindbodylab.html
- Virtual classes, workshops, & groups - cmhc.utexas.edu/groups.html

Students Needing Accommodations: Please notify me of any modification/adaptation you may require to accommodate a disability-related need. You will be requested to provide documentation to the Dean of Student's Office so that the most appropriate accommodations can be determined. Specialized services are available on campus through Services for Students with Disabilities. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

Q drop Policy: The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6).

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin: The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide support for your learning, including: The UT Learning Center:

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/> Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

ITS: Need help with technology? Go to <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

Libraries: Need help searching for information? <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or instructors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): **512-232-5050**. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Again, call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

J317 Journalism Practices Calendar

All lectures & workshops led by Professor Tenore, unless otherwise indicated. All live components will take place from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. CST, via Zoom. Here is the link where you can access all live lectures for this course:

<https://utexas.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0pc-ihpjgpG9Bo7ep-q3accJlTI0TAOMPr> (Meeting ID 994-419-83314)

All live lectures will be recorded and available on Canvas after the fact.

June 2020						
◀ May 2020						Jul 2020 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 Introduction to class: Review of syllabus, assignments & goal of class. Professor and student introductions. (LIVE)	5 Intro to news and journalism lecture (LIVE) Plus, a virtual visit from Writing Center coach Lizzy Smith	
7	8 Intro to AP Style: why it's important, what you need to know (recorded lecture)	9 How to find compelling and interesting story ideas: guest lecture with Pulitzer Prize winning reporter Lane DeGregory (LIVE)	10 Pitch perfect: How to effectively pitch journalistic stories (recorded lecture)	11 Interviewing 101: Tips and best practices (recorded lecture)	12 Diversity in writing: How to find diverse story ideas, sources, and perspectives. Guest lecture with Dallas Morning News editor Tom Huang (LIVE) Review AP Style virtual tip sheet, to prep for quiz. EVENT STORY PITCH DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	13

◀ May 2020		June 2020				Jul 2020 ▶	
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
14 TAKE 10 assignment No. 1 due by 11:59 p.m. Central	15 Story structure: Basics of structuring a news story (recorded lecture) AP STYLE QUIZ No. 1 DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	16 Lead writing: Workshop where we'll deconstruct good leads and talk about why they're well done. (LIVE)	17 Essential writing tips and tools (recorded lecture)	18 Being your own best editor: what to watch for in your writing and how to improve (recorded lecture)	19 Guest lecture with Roy Peter Clark (part 1): Writing is not magic; it's a set of steps (LIVE) Review AP Style virtual tip sheet, to prep for quiz. EVENT STORY DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	20	
21 TAKE 10 assignment No. 2 due by 11:59 p.m. Central	22 Guest lecture with Roy Peter Clark (part 2): Three writing strategies that all writers need (LIVE) PLUS detailed review of the profile piece assignment, including intros to the people you'll be interviewing for it. AP STYLE QUIZ No. 2 DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	23 X-ray reading of compelling profile stories (recorded lecture)	24 Share profile piece pitches in class, offer up feedback to one another. (LIVE) PROFILE PIECE PITCH DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	25 Libel and ethics: what you need to know (recorded lecture)	26 Detailed review of feature story/personal essay assignment, plus AP Style review (recorded lecture)	27	
28 TAKE 10 assignment No. 3 due by 11:59 p.m. Central	29 Feature reporting/storytelling, Part 1: Everything you need to know to get started (recorded lecture) AP STYLE QUIZ No. 3 DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	30 The heart of feature writing: Guest lecture with Esmerelda Bermudez from the Los Angeles Times (LIVE)					

July 2020						
◀ June						August ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Feature reporting/storytelling, Part 2: Lessons from some of the best feature stories (recorded lecture) PROFILE PIECE DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	2 Personal essay X-ray reading workshop (LIVE) AP Style review (virtual tip sheet)	3 Keeping verification and fact-checking top of mind – when writing hard news stories <i>and</i> feature stories (recorded lecture) Review AP Style virtual tip sheet, to prep for quiz FEATURE STORY PITCH DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	4
5 TAKE 10 assignment No. 4 due by 11:59 p.m. Central	6 How multimedia & social media can enhance the written word (recorded lecture) AP STYLE QUIZ No. 4 DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	7 The intersection between PR and journalism: What to keep in mind moving forward: Guest lecture with Elaine Garza (LIVE)	8 Pair with a partner: You'll be assigned a classmate to show a draft of your feature story to. You'll meet with each other for 30 minutes via Zoom to share feedback on the drafts of your feature stories.	9 Wrap-up/last day of class: Takeaways from the class, parting words (LIVE)	10	11
12 TAKE 10 assignment No. 5 due by 11:59 p.m. Central FEATURE STORY DUE BY 11:59 P.M.	13	14	15	16	17	18