

# OXFORD COLLEGE of Emory University

## COURSE OUTLINE

### **Journalism 201 – News Reporting and Writing (WR)**

Dr. Lucas Carpenter  
Spring 2011 Semester

#### **Objective:**

This course is an intensive writing workshop designed to teach the basic elements of news writing. You will learn specific skills, including reporting and interviewing from a diverse and multicultural perspective, hard news and feature writing as well as writing on deadline. You will critique each other and learn through the process of writing and rewriting. The course will also address news values and ethical and legal issues confronting today's journalists.

#### **Required Texts:**

*Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism*, Tim Harrower, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition  
*The Associated Press Stylebook*  
*Math Tools for Journalists*, Kathleen Wickham (second edition)  
subscription to The New York Times

#### **Assignments:**

**Reading:** For class discussions, reading assignments from the text must be completed by the date that they appear on the schedule. You are also required to read *The New York Times* each day to stay on top of current events. Special student subscriptions are available. Students will take turns critiquing content and technique of both newspapers at the beginning of each class. There will also be pop quizzes on current events.

**Writing:** Get ready to write and rewrite! Writing assignments will include an obituary, a story covering a meeting or a speech, and a final project profiling a faculty member or campus figure. Students will be assigned writing exercises in class and outside the classroom. Homework assignments must be submitted on the designated due date at the beginning of class. All written work must be typed, double-spaced with a one-inch margin on both sides and staples in the upper left-hand corner. Please include your name, date and assignment heading in the upper left-hand corner as well. Deadlines are taken seriously in this course and late assignments will not be accepted except in the case of a documented personal or family emergency. It is your responsibility to make up the work missed when absent and hand in the next homework assignment on time.

#### **Grading:**

Your grade will consist of six parts and will reflect all course requirements and material covered. I reserve the right to raise your grade above the mathematical average if your work has steadily improved during the semester and conversely, may lower it, if in the unlikely event your writing has not improved.

#### **1. Associated Press Style: 5 percent**

You will take a series of three multiple-choice, open book tests on AP style, scheduled as follows:

January 21: A-L

January 26: M-Z

#### **2. Basic Skills Test: 10 percent**

This test covers spelling, grammar, style, statistics, and mathematical calculations. Students who fail to achieve a score of 70 percent on the test must retake it later in the semester. The two grades will be averaged. Students can also repeat the test in an effort to improve their grade. You will take the basic skills test on February 4. The make-up test will be on April 18.

**3. In-Class Work and Homework: 20 percent**

Your work during class time will include pop quizzes on current events and reading assignments, deadline writing assignments, news critiques, and participation in class discussions. Each of you will lead a news critique during the course of the semester. You will also have homework assignments reinforcing topics discussed in class.

**4. Midterm Exam: 5 percent**

This in-class exam on March 16 will include an in-class writing exercise.

**5. Final Deadline Writing Assignment: 10 percent**

This in-class assignment on April 22 will involve writing a news story on deadline.

**6. Writing Assignments: 50 percent**

You will have four formal reporting and writing assignments. They include:

Obituary: 10 percent

MOS Story: 10 percent

Speech/Meeting Story: 10 percent

Individual Profile: 20 percent

For the first three assignments (obituary, man-on-the-street survey story, speech or meeting story), you have the option to rewrite these assignments to improve your grade. **The revision is due at the beginning of the next class and must include the original assignment.** The new and the old grade will be averaged for a final grade. For the Individual Profile assignment, you will be required to submit a rough draft April 8 including the names, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of all your sources. I will critique your work and you will rewrite and submit a final draft. You will lose an entire letter grade if you fail to complete and turn in a rough draft of at least 1000 words on April 15. I will critique your work and you will rewrite and submit a final draft for grading.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory, but students are allowed three unexcused absences each semester. Other absences for illness or personal emergencies need to be documented in writing. Unexcused absences after the allotted two will impact your final grade.

**Tardiness:**

Students need to be on time for class. Habitual tardiness will impact your final grade.

**Accuracy:**

Accuracy is the Holy Grail of journalism. A major factual error in any story or written assignment such as the misspelling of a name or place, will result in a lowered grade. In the first instance, it will cost you a full grade. On subsequent assignments, you will automatically receive an F for that assignment. This is a department wide practice for all journalism courses. All of your writing will be judged for correctness in numbers and math, spelling, grammar, punctuation, word usage and AP style. Your grade will reflect your command of these basics.

**Plagiarism:**

Integrity and credibility are the two pillars of journalism. Any student presenting the work of someone else whether from another student, another publication or off the Internet will receive an F. The incident will also be reported to the director of the Journalism Program and the Oxford Honor Council. Please read the attached Journalism Program Plagiarism Statement carefully.

## **Journalism 201 Course Calendar**

### **Week 1: Introduction**

Jan 12-14: Class orientation, review of syllabus, and plagiarism statement. Class introductions.

### **Week 2: The Basics: Format and AP Style and What is News?**

Jan 17-21 Harrower, chap. 1-2; Wickham, chap. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8.

Jan 21 AP Style Test A-L

### **Week 3: Newswriting Style**

Jan 24-28 Harrower, chap. 3.

Jan 26: AP Style Test M-Z

### **Week 4: Writing News Leads and Anatomy 201**

Jan 31-Feb 4 Harrower, chap. 3.

Feb 4 Basic Skills Test

### **Week 5: The Body of a News Story**

Feb 7-11 Inverted Pyramid and Narrative Handouts

### **Week 6: Writing Obituaries**

Feb 14-18 Harrower, p. 96-98. Obituary assignment due February 25.

### **Week 7: Quotations and Attribution and Interviewing**

Feb 21-25 Harrower, chap. 4. MOS assignment due March 4. Obituary assignment due.

### **Week 8: Speeches and Meetings**

Feb 28-Mar 4 Harrower, chap. 5. MOS assignment due. Individual Profile story guidelines announced.  
Rough draft due April 8.

### **March 7-11 Spring Break**

### **Week 9: Midterm Exam and Interviewing Workshop**

Mar 14-18 Midterm Exam, March 16. Interviewing workshop and in-class writing assignment.

### **Week 10: Features**

Mar 21-25 Harrower, chap. 6. Features continued.

### **Week 11: Broadcast Journalism and Online Reporting**

Mar 28-April 1 Harrower, chap. 8-9. Speech assignment due April 1. Individual Profile rough draft, minimum 1000 words, due April 8.

### **Week 12: Ethics and Diversity and Communications Law**

April 4-8 Harrower, chap 7. Individual Profile rough draft due April 8.

### **Week 13: Careers in Journalism and Ethics and Diversity**

April 11-15 *The Elements of Journalism* handout. Individual Profile due April 15.

### **Week 14: Basic Skills Encore and Final Deadline Writing Assignment**

April 18-22 Repeat Skills Test on April 18. General review for final deadline writing assignment.  
Final deadline writing assignment in-class on April 22.

April 25 Last Class

## **JOURNALISM PROGRAM PLAGIARISM STATEMENT**

Integrity and credibility are the journalist's most important assets. If you plagiarize, you have comprised the two most important tools a journalist has. Journalism demands originality in writing, sourcing of information that is not common knowledge, attribution of others' ideas and statements, and accurate representation of points of view. Plagiarism is professional theft. The Oxford College Plagiarism Statement says: "Any person who uses a writer's ideas or phraseology without giving due credit is guilty of plagiarism."

Plagiarism has ended many journalism careers. The journalist who plagiarizes others' work violates the very purpose of the profession and destroys his or her reputation. Any student found plagiarizing in a course or internship will be subject to investigation by the Honor Council. If the Honor Council determines that a student has plagiarized, the Council has the prerogative of assigning any of the following penalties:

- F on the assignment
- F on the course
- Suspension
- Dismissal
- Written notation on the student performance record

A journalistic article differs from a research paper. Information in a research paper is credited in footnotes or other kinds of documentation. The Oxford College Plagiarism Statement does not require documentation for information that is readily available through several sources and/or is considered common knowledge.

In journalism, source citations are included in the body of the story. The credit should include the name of the person or source, a person's affiliation, and any other information that provides necessary context. The journalist provides attribution for all direct and indirect quotes and paraphrased information and statements. Quotation marks are used even if only a word or phrase of a statement is used. Journalists attribute to specific individuals, organizations or sources and do not create composite sources.

Both direct quotations and paraphrases require attribution. A good paraphrase expresses the ideas found in the source (for which credit is always given) but not in the same words. It preserves the sense, but not the form, of the original. It does not retain the sentence patterns and merely substitute synonyms for the original words, or does it retain the original words and merely alter the sentence patterns. It is a genuine restatement. It is briefer than its sources. (Floyd D. Watkins and William B. Dingham, *Practical English Handbook*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston, 1991), pp. 357-358).

The principles of attribution apply equally to all forms of newsgathering. Information acquired from other news sources, whether print, broadcast or the internet, should be attributed. Use of graphics, images, and audio or video material from the internet or other sources requires full credit.

Plagiarism is a breach of public trust.

The Journalism Program expects students will comply with the policy as outlined above. If you have questions regarding documentation, citation, or plagiarism, please contact your instructor or Sheila Tefft, Director of the Journalism Program.