

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

Reporting & Writing (JOUR 2010C)

Course summary

Instructor: Educator Associate Professor Leonard N. Penix, J.D., Esq.
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TEXT AND REQUIRED READINGS

The instructor's e-textbook used for this course, titled "Journalism 3.0," may be read or downloaded in Canopy/Blackboard.

Additional texts required for this course include:

- Goldstein, Norm, ed. Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law. New York: The Associated Press, 2019.
- All PDFs posted to Blackboard are considered required reading.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Newsgathering and news writing for print and online publications will be covered during this course, which is designed as a practical guide and introduction to the fundamentals of journalism. This course shall cover basic print and online news writing skills, Associated Press style, beat reporting, types and characteristics of news stories and newsworthy events, research and interviewing skills, media law and ethics, and related journalistic topics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To pass this course, students must demonstrate an understanding of:

- The essence of news; news writing, newsgathering and newsroom organization, convergence, news judgment and the elements of news;
- The inverted pyramid lead and structure; the language of news writing and common characteristics of news stories; the "five Ws and H"; basic Associated Press style for abbreviations, capitalization, names and courtesy titles, numbers, spelling and related subjects.
- Techniques and tools for finding newsworthy story subjects and identifying news sources;
- Interviewing, research and strategies for newsgathering; using attribution; direct and partial quotes and paraphrasing.
- Cultivation and identification of news sources; ethics of using tape recorders, Skype, FaceTime or email interviews; online record checking; fact checking and verification.
- Computer-assisted reporting; acquiring public records; online newsgathering; open meeting, shield and public records laws.
- Managing breaking news coverage; techniques for covering breaking news events, including second-day leads, 10ads and related tools.
- Beat reporting; covering government, politics, police, meetings, speeches, press conferences and courts; localizing stories and using background information; writing obituaries.
- Investigative reporting and creating news packages; covering specialty beats, such as business and labor, science, medicine and the environment.
- Tagging, social media and branding; story structures and organization; transitions; weaving details and description into news articles.
- News writing for the online, mobile and social media news consumption; data-driven journalism; hyperlinking and the synopsis; multimedia storytelling; using headlines and leads as feeds to mobile devices and websites; writing news for digital and social media.

- Citizen journalism, social networks and digital dissemination of news; open-source reporting; decentralization of news decision-making.
- Media law and ethics; defamation; conflict of interest; invasion of privacy; professional code of ethics.

EVALUATION

The instructor shall administer in-class and out-of-class exercises, quizzes, examinations and writing assignments, and midterm and final examinations. The midterm and final examinations, writing assignments, exercises and quizzes shall be weighed proportionately in determining the student's final grade. Students shall be expected to attend and write stories about one University of Cincinnati Board of Trustees meeting, which may include committee meetings and last all day and is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Oct. 22, 2019. The trustees typically convene at 407 Annie Laws, Teachers Dyer. The story about the meeting of the board of trustees is due at the beginning of the first class period following the meeting, and the student is responsible for all changes in meeting times, locations and dates. **ADVANCE WARNING:** THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT RESPONSIBLE IF THIS COURSE REQUIREMENT INTERFERES OR CONFLICTS WITH OTHER STUDENT OBLIGATIONS, DUTIES AND SCHEDULES.

PREREQUISITES

Either Principles of American Journalism (JOUR-1030) or Introduction to Journalism (JOUR-214) may serve as a prerequisite for this course. No credit for this course will be given unless one of these two prerequisites is successfully completed with a grade of "C-" or better.

WRITING FORMAT

Unless otherwise noted by the instructor, all assignments shall be typed or produced at a computer with printer and double-spaced with one-inch margins. All assignments must be emailed to the instructor or they will not be graded or edited. No hand-written assignments shall be accepted. Contact the instructor for out-of-class use of the journalism department computer facilities.

DEADLINES

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned due date or as otherwise noted by the instructor. A penalty of one letter grade, or ten points, may be assessed for each day an assignment is submitted after its deadline.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all classes. Attendance may be taken at each class and two unexcused absences may result in an automatic withdrawal or a grade of "F" for the course.

PLAGIARISM AND UC STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students shall abide by the UC Student Code of Conduct, are expected to exercise the highest ethical conduct, and plagiarism shall not be tolerated. Any student guilty of plagiarism is subject to receiving a failing grade for the course and faces possible expulsion from the University of Cincinnati. Plagiarism is defined as: submitting another's published or unpublished work, in whole or in part, or in paraphrase, as one's own without fully and properly crediting the author with attribution, footnotes, citations or bibliographical reference; submitting as one's original work, material obtained from an individual or agency without reference to the person or agency as the source of the material; submitting as one's original work, material that has been produced through unacknowledged collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

University of Cincinnati policies require students to self-identify and provide proper documentation to appropriate university officials.

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Standard University of Cincinnati policy shall be followed. A grade of "W" or "F" may be assigned to drops on the dates specified by the Registrar of the University of Cincinnati. Consult with the instructor before seeking a withdrawal. When students submit withdrawals, they will receive automatic notifications that withdrawals were submitted, followed by emails confirming this. The instructor reserves the right to change a "W" to an "F," if that reflects a more appropriate evaluation, when final grades are submitted.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

The class schedule outlined below is tentative in nature and subject to amendments to fit the needs of the students and the class as a whole. Materials provided in class or posted to Blackboard are considered required readings. Instructions for out-of-class story assignments will be provided in class and online before each story is due. All reading assignments shall be posted to Blackboard.

Classes and office hours will be canceled according to applicable holiday and other schedules set by the registrar of the University of Cincinnati or by order of appropriate university officials.

Week I

Topics: the essence of news; introduction to news writing, newsgathering and newsroom organization, convergence, news judgment and the elements of news; the conflict of balanced reporting with traditional journalistic values in the digital age.

Quiz

First story due (*instructions are attached to syllabus*).

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from "Journalism 3.0" and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week II

Topics: the inverted pyramid lead and structure; the language of news writing and common characteristics of news stories; the "five Ws and H"; introduction to Associated Press style.

Quiz

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from "Journalism 3.0" and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week III

Topics: techniques and tools for finding newsworthy story subjects and identifying news sources; basic Associated Press style for abbreviations, capitalization, names and courtesy titles, numbers, spelling and related subjects.

Second story due.

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from "Journalism 3.0" and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week IV

Topics: interviewing, research and strategies for newsgathering; using attribution; direct and partial quotes and paraphrasing.

Quiz.

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from "Journalism 3.0" and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week V

Topics: interviewing, cultivating and identifying news sources; ethics of using tape recorders, Skype, FaceTime or email interviews; online record checking; fact checking and verification.

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from "Journalism 3.0" and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard. **No quiz is set and no story is due this week.**

Week VI

Trustee story is tentatively due by or before Oct. 24, 2019.

Topics: computer-assisted reporting; acquiring public records; online newsgathering; open meeting, shield and public records laws.

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from “Journalism 3.0” and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week VII

Topics: midterm review; introduction to beat reporting; covering government, politics, police, meetings, speeches, press conferences and courts; managing breaking news coverage; techniques for covering breaking news events, including second-day leads, 10ads and related tools.

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from “Journalism 3.0” and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week VIII

Midterm examination (date TBA).

Topics: localizing stories and using background information; writing obituaries.

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from “Journalism 3.0” and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week IX

Topics: investigative reporting and creating news packages; covering specialty beats, such as business and labor, science, medicine and the environment.

Optional quiz

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from “Journalism 3.0” and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week X

Topics: data-driven journalism; tagging, social media and branding; story structures and organization; transitions; weaving details and description into news articles.

Optional quiz

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from “Journalism 3.0” and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week XI

Topics: news writing for the online, mobile and social media news consumption; hyperlinking and the synopsis; introduction to multimedia storytelling; using headlines and leads as feeds to mobile devices; writing news for digital media.

Final story topic due

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from “Journalism 3.0” and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week XII

Topics: citizen journalism, social networks and digital dissemination of news; open-source reporting; decentralization of news decision-making.

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from “Journalism 3.0” and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week XIII to Week XIV

Topics: media law and ethics; “checkbook journalism”; defamation; conflict of interest; invasion of privacy; professional code of ethics.

Sources, expected lead for final story due

Readings: handouts from instructor, pages as assigned during class from “Journalism 3.0” and PDFs to be posted to Blackboard.

Week XV

Topic: Cumulative course review.

Final story due.

Final Examination: *The time and date set for the final examination will be announced via Blackboard and in the classroom.*

FIRST STORY ASSIGNMENT

Instructions: Use these facts to compile an online breaking news story. This story, which should be written as if the events described below occurred on the same day the article is published, is due at the beginning of the next class. Please follow AP style, use only one sentence per paragraph, and include only relevant direct quotes from sources described below and paraphrase other information. Include an inverted pyramid summary lead (no feature leads) that reflects as many of the “5 Ws and H” as possible. **This story is due at the next class period.**

Facts:

1. A highway accident happened today.
2. Truck and chickens owned by Acme Farms of Oakley, a neighborhood in Cincinnati; driver was Anthony Devaldi, 36, of Batavia, Ohio.
3. From interview with Cincinnati Police Sgt. Fred Gompers on scene: “The truck was driving north when Devaldi seems to have lost control. It skidded for about 50 yards before overturning a quarter mile south of the Freemont Street exit near Norwood. This was at 4:05 p.m. Devaldi was unhurt. No other vehicles involved.”
4. A truck loaded with live chickens overturned on Interstate 275.
5. More from Gompers: “Many of the chickens were killed in the crash, but about 60 chickens escaped onto the road. We have no word on exactly how many chickens were on the truck. My partner and I immediately called for help. Three other squad cars arrived, and two officers directed traffic and supervised the removal of the truck while four of us chased chickens. You had to sort of fall on top of them and give them a good hug. Then we stuffed them back into cages from the truck. Most seemed sort of dazed, so they weren’t that hard to catch.”
6. More from Gompers: “For a while the freeway there looked like a chicken farm. But we had it cleared of chickens and the truck towed away by 5:15 p.m. The truck and chickens had completely blocked northbound traffic for at least 45 minutes, and southbound traffic was partially obstructed by the chickens for about that long. Some drivers were delayed up to one hour. Nothing longer than that.”
7. Gompers says no criminal charges will be filed. The accident left the highway filled with live chickens and causing rush-hour traffic delays of up to one hour.
8. Devaldi and representatives of Acme say they don’t want to talk about the accident at this point with the media.

From interview with Sally Burrows, of Westwood, a driver in the northbound lane of I-275 who says she was delayed 45 minutes by the accident: “You had to see it. I have never seen anything like that: four police officers chasing three dozen chickens around the freeway. I’ll be late getting home but you know it was worth it for the entertainment

NOTE: A section on transferable skills begins on the next page.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

1. **Critical Thinking:** Analyze complex issues and formulate insightful conclusions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	SKILLS
1A. DEFINE THE PROBLEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a problem or question and its component parts Recognize and assess underlying assumptions
1B. INVESTIGATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, gather, and analyze the information/data necessary to address the problem or question Identify as appropriate, relevant principles, concepts, values, histories, and theories
1C. ANALYZE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of alternative explanations Assess information/data for credibility (e.g., bias, reliability, validity) and relevance Reflect on one's own biases and experiences and their possible impact on one's conclusions
1D. CONCLUDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrive at logical conclusions and solutions that acknowledge varied perspectives and reflect an informed, well-reasoned line of thinking

2. **Written Expression:** Write clearly and effectively.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	SKILLS
2A. UNDERSTAND STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop proficiency in basic mechanics of writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation, organization) and be able to proofread for error-free writing
2B. UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ syntax, structure, and style appropriate to a particular community or audience
2C. SUBSTANTIATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write in a logical flow and incorporate appropriate evidence Make connections between ideas to reinforce meaning Incorporate source/reference material appropriately in support of a claim, using an appropriate formal documentation system
2D. CREATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ideas, emotions, and experiences through creative imagery and language

3. Research and Creative Process: Generate insightful research questions and come up with innovative project designs.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	SKILLS
3A. FORMULATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate insightful and testable research questions and hypotheses, or identify a creative challenge
3B. SOLVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate creative thinking, curiosity, initiative, and originality in data gathering and problem-solving • Focus creative practices rooted in disciplinary or interdisciplinary methods that address the problem or challenge • Take risks, and demonstrate tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity; exhibit flexibility and persistence in learning from mistakes
3C. DISSEMINATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and defend results in appropriate ways for multiple audiences

4. Information and Technological Literacy: Locate, evaluate and effectively use information from a wide range of sources.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	SKILLS
4A. SEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly define the purpose of investigation and key areas of inquiry, and develop a search strategy • Investigate a wide array of sources from varied media and formats • Synthesize and summarize information. Continually improve information gathering as knowledge grows
4B. RECOGNIZE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate criteria for evaluating sources and information • Make a clear distinction between well-substantiated information and mere opinion • Challenge the credibility of sources and information • Interpret and communicate information appropriately to support assertions and lines of reasoning
4C. UTILIZE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay current with and employ technological tools to achieve academic, workplace, and personal goals • Use electronic technology and social media to collaborate and do work securely, effectively, ethically, and legally • Incorporate new information into one's knowledge base and use information to become an informed citizen and lifelong learner

5. Human Expression: Interpret, analyze and draw perceptive conclusions from texts and other media.

KNOWLEDGE COMPONENTS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
5A. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and explain the relationships between societal, cultural, and historical contexts of text and/or other forms of human expression
5B. ETHICAL EXCHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate knowledge of and empathy for the diversity of values, beliefs, ideas, and practices embodied in the human experience Respond intellectually to texts and other forms of human expression through respectful discussion and elaboration with others
5C. ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate methods and tools to analyze, interpret, and critique the structure style and ideas covered in a text, film, work of art, or other form of human expression
5D. CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make explicit connections/reference to works of literature or art, to ideas in philosophy or religion, or to historical events, sequences, or themes to enhance a discussion, interpretation, or analysis Identify culturally important references or symbols in readings, speeches, and objects

6. Society and Individual: Understand human behavior and institutions and how they impact important society-wide events and one's own personal beliefs.

KNOWLEDGE COMPONENTS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
6A. SOCIAL SYSTEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe connections among social, economic, geo-political, technological, environmental, and cultural systems, and articulate their impacts on communities and individuals
6B. INQUIRY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, explain, and apply theories to social phenomena and human activity
6C. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the need for a world that honors human difference, evaluates issues of social justice, and takes action to advance equity and inclusion Identify sources of varying and/or conflicting identities and suggest possible explanations, pathways, or solutions to problems and issues facing individuals, families, communities, societies, and the world.