

Syllabus

Reporting and Writing (writing intensive)

CMUN 205, Section 01W

T/Th 11:30-12:45

SOC 003

Dr. Fletcher (cfletch@luc.edu)

HOW TO USE THIS SYLLABUS:

THIS SYLLABUS HAS THREE PARTS:

- 1. PART I PRESENTS DEADLINES FOR TESTS AND PAPERS. IT ALSO GIVES THE POINT VALUE FOR ASSIGNMENTS.**
- 2. PART II DESCRIBES THE COURSE AND THE GRADING SYSTEM.**
- 4. PART III. PRESENTS THE CLASS SCHEDULE.**

THIS FORMAT SHOULD HELP YOU ACCESS INFORMATION QUICKLY BY SCROLLING TO “Part I, II, III, OR IV.” It also will keep you on top of test and deadline dates, since they are listed first. It might be a good idea to copy and paste these inside your notebook or put them up on your phone.

IMPORTANT: You are responsible for knowing the content of the syllabus. The rules and regulations apply, whether you have reviewed them or not. You should also check Sakai each week and before each class (under “Announcements”) for any changes.

PART I: Exams, Quizzes and Paper Deadlines for This Class:

- ✓ **9/25: Paper One (600-750 words) 100 points.**
- ✓ **10/1: Midterm exam 100 points**
- ✓ **10/8: Grammar/punctuation quiz 50 points**
- ✓ **10/22: First content exam (100 points) NOTE:** In place of a final exam, we’ll have two content exams given after the midterm.
Each of these exams counts for 100 points.
- ✓ **10/30: Paper Two (900- 1200 words) 200 points**

- ✓ **11/17 Lab rewrites due. Rewrites can be handed in any time during semester; this is final deadline) See “Rewrites,” below.**
- ✓ **11/19 Platform presentation. 50 points**
- ✓ **11/24 AP Style Quiz 50 points**
- ✓ **12/1 Paper One and Two Rewrites due (hard copies only).**
- ✓ **12/3 Second content exam after midterm. 100 points.**

NOTE: We will talk about how to do the outside papers in class. I will also post a template for paper assignments under “Announcements” on Sakai.

WORK THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER:

- ✓ **Lab work** (writing in class on deadline): **200 points** (points for each lab will vary).
- ✓ **Participation in class and lab (this means active and constructive contributions, not just attendance): 50 points.**

LAB DEADLINES: At the end of most labs, you will email me your work; the deadline is 12:45 p.m. Unless I tell the class that they have some extra time, if you miss your deadline, you’ll be marked down one point a minute. Journalism is about meeting deadlines; it is better to send something that may need a few more sentences or some editing instead of not submitting your article at all.

REWRITES: Lab assignments and outside assignments may be rewritten for a new grade; however, they must consist of new material. If you want to rewrite a lab, ask me for a different assignment. If you need to rewrite an outside paper, you must attend another event or interview another person. If your rewrite is lower than your original paper, you earn the higher grade.

You may hand in a rewritten assignment (hard copy) at any time during the semester. However, the absolute deadline for lab rewrites is 11/17. The deadline for rewrites of Paper One and/or Paper Two is 12/1. These must be handed in as hard copies. No rewrites will be accepted after these dates.

PART II: COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GRADING STANDARDS

Course Description: This course fills a requirement for the Journalism minor and major and for Advertising/Public Relations. It is also a "writing intensive" course.

Course Goals: This course takes a critical approach ("critical" meaning both enhancing your appreciation of what it takes to gather and report the news and increasing your awareness of the news media's failures and difficulties) to contemporary media reporting and writing. You will learn about reporting and writing for different platforms (print, broadcast, and internet). An important emphasis throughout will be ethical issues in news gathering and reporting. This course will introduce you to the basic elements of media reporting and writing, with emphasis on developing news judgment, finding and verifying information, learning effective interviewing skills, meeting deadlines, and learning how to write clearly and concisely.

Required Text:

Reporting for the Media, 10th edition. Bender, et al. Students must have THIS edition.

NOTE: This is available at Loyola's Bookstore, WTC.

Class Format:

The first class of each week usually will consist of lecture and discussion. The second class will be lab, during which you will usually write in class, on deadline.

Most assignments will be emailed to me; however -- MAKE SURE YOU BRING YOUR LU ID AND CHECK THAT THERE IS ENOUGH MONEY ON YOUR CARD IN CASE YOU NEED TO PRINT OUT IN LAB.

GROUND RULES:

Absences: Attendance counts. Lab cannot be made up. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting the notes from another student. Authorized

absences for travel (e.g, travel for a club or team) must be given to me in advance. Documentation must be provided.

Plan carefully: If you miss a lab or a quiz, you cannot make it up (unless for pre-authorized travel or if you have a documented illness or authorized absence). If you miss a guest speaker, you lose ten points.

Laptop/iPhone Use: Laptops and other digital devices cannot be used to take notes during lectures, unless you have an authorized reason for doing so. Using one without such permission will count as a late (see “Policy on lateness,” below).

Class Participation:

In class, questions and comments are welcome. I expect everyone to contribute to this learning community. Class participation should be regular and meaningful. It is worth 50 points of your final grade. Attendance itself does not count as participation. Up to 100 points may deducted from your final grade for disruptive or inappropriate behavior.

Policy on lateness:

Come to class on time. Coming in late (more than five minutes) disrupts the class. Everyone is entitled to **one** late arrival. However, unless there is a verified reason (shuttle bus lateness), I expect you to be here on time. You lose 10 points for every late arrival, or for classroom “presentism,” as in:

- ✓ Leaving during class (unless it is for a medical reason)
- ✓ Looking at your computer/cell phone or laptop, or doing other work during class
- ✓ Willful napping.

ALSO:

- ✓ No eating is allowed in class. (unless it is for a documented medical reason)
- ✓ Make sure your cell phones are off (**not** on vibrate) before class begins.
- ✓ No laptops allowed, unless you have a documented reason for needing to use one.

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

- ✓ **Plagiarism** of any form and of any length on assignments will be reported to the Dean of Students immediately and the student will receive a grade of "F" for the course. According to Loyola University guidelines(SOC website):

“ 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 submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, audio, video, etc.”

- ✓ **Fabrication** of a whole assignment, or any part of an assignment, will result in an “F” for this course.
- ✓ **Cheating** on an exam or quiz will result in an "F" for this course.

Office Hours:

T/TH: I'm available before class (10:30 to 11:30) and after 2:15.

My office is in SOC 210 at WTC. Email me ahead of time to make sure I'm not in a meeting when you stop by. I'm at the LSC campus on Th, from 2:30 to 4 p.m. (email me for where to meet).

If these times don't fit your schedule, feel free to set up an appointment by e-mailing me at cfletch@luc.edu.

Throughout the semester, feel free to email me any time with questions about your work.

GRADING

You will receive a numerical grade on all work for this class. There will be 1,000 points possible.

The following point totals guarantee grades:

930-1000 = A

900 -929 = A-
870-899 = B+
830-869= B
800-829 = B-
770-799= C+
730-769=C
700-729= C-
670-699= D+
600-669= D
Below 600 = F

BREAKDOWN OF OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENTS:

You will write two outside papers:

- ✓ A report on one session of one of your classes this semester (600-900 words; 100 pts)
- ✓ A “behind the scenes” story or profile feature story (1000-1200 words; (200 pts). See below re platform component for this story
NOTE: We’ll talk about each of these papers in class and I will put up guidelines for writing each under “Announcements” on Sakai.

SAFETY NOTE: MAKE SURE TO SAVE ALL LAB WORK AND YOUR OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENTS. IF YOU EMAIL WORK TO YOURSELF, MAKE SURE YOU SAVE IT IN A FOLDER. LOST WORK IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

PLATFORM ASSIGNMENT (50 points):

One of the requirements of this class is that you do a “platform” version of the second paper. You can use your camera or iPhone or digital voice recorder, or borrow equipment from Digital Media Services in the I.C. or the SOC. Like a working journalist, you will get video and audio and edit it to accompany your written story.

It's important that you get started early on whichever story you choose! For whichever paper you do, the "all platform" version will be due and presented in class in the last two weeks of the semester. See below for how written assignments and platform assignment will be graded (See "Grading for Platform Assignment," below).

GRADING CRITERIA WORKSHEET (COURSE GRADE)

Minimum criteria to receive a passing grade (D+ for CMUN majors, D for non-majors):

- **regular, on-time attendance**
- **completion of all original (i.e., non-plagiarized) papers and assignments, handed in on time and of college-level quality**
- **passing grade on last two content exams (more than a D)**

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT:

You have to satisfy the above criteria to pass the course. **If you have not handed in one of your two outside papers, you will fail the class.** Once you have satisfied these criteria, your letter grade will be determined as follows:

GRADING OF INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: You will be graded on both content (reporting accurately) and style (writing clearly, concisely, and grammatically).

Grading Criteria for Written Work

A: Publishable work with no spelling, grammatical, punctuation or AP Style errors and the proper information and sources written in a lively, well-organized manner.

B: Minimal spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors.

Minimal missing

information and sources; minimal problems with the lead and organization.

C: Notable number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors.

Noticeable missing information and sources; problems with the lead, nut graf and organization.

D: Significant number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors.

Significant missing information and sources; Significant problems with the lead, nut graf and organization.

F: Misspelling of proper names. Other major spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Almost total lack of information and sources; Severe problems with the lead and organization.

NOTE: I will only take off for AP Style errors on your second outside paper.

The breakdown of points for each paper will be given on Sakai weeks before the assignment is due.

POINTS WILL BE TAKEN OFF FOR THE FOLLOWING (for outside and in-class papers):

- a) **Five points for incorrect formatting, as in where put headings, missing slug line.**
- b) **Five points for any time essential information is left out, like "when" or "where."**
- c) **Five points for formatting paper wrong**
- d) **Two points for each time attribution is missing.**
- e) **Two points for each of these grammatical errors: using commas, semicolons, or apostrophes incorrectly; using incorrect agreement; using sentence fragments; having dangling or misplaced modifiers.**
- f) **Spelling errors (see below, "Spelling")**

Spelling: For outside assignments, your grade will be lowered by 2 points for each error. For in-class assignments, your grade will be lowered by 2 points for every three errors. You will be graded down for misusing "it's" and "its," as well as "a lot," "affect and effect," and other common

misspellings. Do not trust Spell check. Accuracy is crucial in journalism, and spelling is a big part of it.

Factual error: The grade of “F” is automatically given to papers containing any factual error: for example, misspelling your source’s or subject’s name or giving wrong information (for example, identifying Donald Heider as the Dean of Students , or Evanston as a western suburb). Live by this rule: When in doubt, check it out! A paper with a factual error cannot be re-written. **Note:** If you misspell either the first or the last name of a subject, even one time, the paper receives a grade of F. So, if you write, Dean Dan Heider, this would count as a factual error.

Late papers: Journalism is about meeting deadlines. A late paper, whether lab or outside paper, will be graded down ten points for each day the paper is late, unless you have an authorized excuse.

GRADING FOR PLATFORM ASSIGNMENT:

Grading Criteria for Video, Photography or Audio Work:

Video:

A: Clearly focused video, proper framing, lively content, tells a compelling story,

understandable audio, 3-5 minutes in length.

B-F: Varies depending upon how many of the above items are missing.

Photography:

A: Clearly focused, proper framing, lively content, tells a compelling story, variety of

photographs in sample.

B-F: Varies depending upon how many of the above items are missing.

Audio:

A: Captures listener’s attention immediately, tells a compelling story with clear details and quotes, good sound quality.

B-F: Varies depending on how many of the above items are missing.

PART III: CLASS SCHEDULE

Changes in the schedule may be made, depending on the progress we make through the material and the availability of guests. Written

assignments are due on the date indicated. You lose 10 points for every day a paper is late. If you fail to turn in an outside paper at all, unless you have a documented excuse, your grade is F for the course.

Note: Readings are to be completed by the date indicated.

I expect you to have your textbook by the end of week one and the first readings completed by 9/1. Quizzes on readings may be given at any point in the semester.

8/25 Introduction.

- ✓ Talk about possible IES visit at LSC -- get times of availability.
- ✓ If time, do Assessment requirement

8/27 Lab. Observation skills.

9/1 FOCUS: CONTEMPORARY JOURNALISM ACROSS PLATFORMS AND WHAT IS NEWS?

Read before class:

- ✓ Bender. Preface (xi-xii. Stop at “New Features”)
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 1
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 5
- ✓ **PLAGIARISM (WHAT IT IS/HOW TO AVOID)**
Read the section on the syllabus regarding this.

In class:

View NYT front page and *Guardian* ad.

Talk about first paper: covering an LU lecture

9/3 Lab. **Observation Skills**

Before class, review Bender, p. 10-11 (“Story format”) on how to set up all your papers. Pay special attention to where to put name, date, and slug line. **Five points off for incorrect formatting starting in lab today.** From this point on, you must use correct format on lab and outside papers.

9/8 FOCUS: HOW TO USE OBSERVATION SKILLS TO COVER AN EVENT AND WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ETHICAL REPORTING, WRITING, AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Before class, read:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 15 p. 379-389 (Don't read "the Writing Coach")
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 7 (through p. 174)

In class: Discuss event coverage and covering class lecture for first outside paper.

9/9 GUIDELINES FOR PAPER ONE (DUE 9/25) WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI, UNDER "ANNOUNCEMENTS."

9/10 Lab.

9/15 FOCUS: HOW TO WRITE CLEARLY AND WITHOUT BIAS: Grammar, Punctuation, News Writing Style and Attribution

Before class, read:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 2, pp.21-36
- ✓ Bender, Chapters 3 and 4
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 11

NOTE: If you feel your grammar is especially shaky (trust me, you are not alone!), I'm happy to work with you outside of class to clear up your grammar questions.

NOTE: Your Grammar/Punctuation Pre-Quiz on 9/17 and your Quiz on 10/1 will cover the above material and handout on "Common Writing Errors."

In class

- ✓ Review grammar, punctuation and news writing style.
- ✓ Receive "Common Writing Errors" handout.

9/17 Lab. Part One: Bring your laptops. This lab is on discovering news story style. You'll work in groups on a story of your choice and present to class. **Part Two:** Grammar/Punctuation pre-quiz

9/18 Midterm review notes will be posted under “Announcements” in Sakai. Also, review notes for Grammar/Punctuation Quiz will be given.

9/22 FOCUS: HOW TO ORGANIZE DIFFERENT TYPES OF NEWS STORIES AND HOW TO WRITE LEDES FOR THESE STORIES

- ✓ Read Bender: Chapter 10 to p. 251. Skip “Narrative Style.” Resume with “Using Transitions,” p. 253. Read through p. 26:
- ✓ Read Bender, Chapters 8 and 9
- In class:**
- ✓ Emergency questions re Article One (due 9/25)
- ✓ Finish lab on structure.

9/23 I’ll send you info’ re 9/29 class; SOC event.

9/24 Lab.

9/25 DEADLINE: First outside paper on class is due by 5 p.m. (700-900) to cfletch@luc.edu. Guidelines are posted under “Announcements” on Sakai. Ten points off if paper is received after 5 p.m. on this date and an additional ten for every day late.

9/29 Attend and report on event; room and assignment TBA.

10/1 **MIDTERM (blue book on class to date) 100 points**

10/6 **MID-SEMESTER BREAK. NO CLASS.**

10/8 **GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION Quiz 50 points**

10/13 FOCUS: 1. HOW TO INTERVIEW PEOPLE FOR PRINT AND BROADCAST STORIES 2. HOW TO USE AP STYLE

Before class:

- ✓ Read Bender, Chapter 12
- ✓ Study AP Style rules for “Abbreviations, Addresses and Capitalization” posted under “Resources” on Sakai. NOTE: Do NOT study the rules for broadcast writing.

- ✓ Read this article: : http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/19/magazine/you-just-got-out-of-prison-now-what.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fmagazine&action=click&contentCollection=magazine®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&contentPlacemen t=10&pgtype=sectionfront
- ✓ Jot down a few notes on what you noticed about how the reporter got the story in the above article; bring them into class.

In class:

Discuss Paper Two (due 10/30).

10/14 First Content Exam study guide will be posted on Sakai, under Announcements. The exam will be 10/22. 100 points

10/15 Visit from newspaper journalist/editor re how to cover breaking news events. Take notes; this material will be on the first content exam. This will also help you in doing your platform at end of semester.

10/15 Guidelines for writing PAPER TWO (due 10/30) will be posted on Sakai, under “Announcements.”

10/20 FOCUS: HOW TO WRITE FOR DIGITAL MEDIA AND PREPARE DIGITAL MEDIA PACKAGES

Before class:

- ✓ Read Bender, Chapter 14 (Skip pp. 360-364, from “Blogging and Digital Media” through “Microblogging”). Resume with “Digital News Package” through p. 369.
- ✓ Study AP Style: “Numbers, Spellings, and Time” in Sakai, under “Resources.” Again, do not study broadcast rules.

In class: Work in groups re platforms.

10/22 FIRST CONTENT EXAM. 100 points

10/26 You will receive your midterm grades by email today. This will enable you to decide if you want to/need to withdraw from this course by 10/30, which is the last date for withdrawing with a “W,” rather than a “WF.”

10/27 FOCUS: HOW TO REPORT AND WRITE FOR BROADCAST JOURNALISM

Before class:

- ✓ Chapter 13, pp. 331-338 (stop at “Guidelines for Copy Preparation”)
- ✓ Study “Titles and Words” in AP Style Guide in Sakai, under “Resources.”

In class: AP Style pre-quiz.

10/29 Lab.

**10/30 DEADLINE: PAPER TWO due by email to cfletch@luc.edu.
Deadline: 5 p.m.**

10/30 Deadline for withdrawing with a “W,” rather than a WF. If you have a D at midterm, you should consider withdrawing.

11/3 FOCUS: HOW TO AVOID LIBEL AND RESPECT PRIVACY

Before class: Read Bender, pp. 129-141 (Stop at “Newsgathering Issues”)
In class: Discuss platform presentations (11/19)

11/4 Guidelines for platform presentations will be posted on Sakai, under Announcements. See “Grading for Platform Assignment” at end of syllabus.

11/5 Lab.

11/10 FOCUS: WRITING SPECIALIZED STORIES AND OBITUARIES.

- ✓ **Before class:** Read Bender, Chapter 16
- ✓ Read these New York Times obits:

- ✓ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/10/business/media/vincent-musetto-74-author-of-headless-headline-of-ageless-fame.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=second-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>
- ✓ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/06/arts/ruth-feldman-a-quiz-kid-who-later-distilled-the-experience-in-a-book-dies-at-80.html>
- ✓ <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/09/world/asia/alan-bond-yachting-hero-and-convict-dies-at-77.html>

11/12 Lab.

11/17 DEADLINE FOR HANDING IN LAB REWRITES.

FOCUS: ADVANCED REPORTING TECHNIQUES/STATISTICS and CRIME/ACCIDENT/DISASTER REPORTING. NEWSGATHERING ISSUES

Before class:

- ✓ Read Bender, Chapter 6, pp. 141-146 AND .
 - ✓ Chapter 18 (to bottom of p.464)
 - ✓ Chapter 19
- ✓ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/05/opinion/sunday/seth-stephens-davidowitz--of-our-digital-lives.html?_r=0

11/19 PLATFORM VERSION OF PAPER TWO DUE. (ten- minute maximum) Email yourself your presentation or bring flash to class for presentation. MANDATORY ATTENDANCE. QUESTIONS ON PRESENTATIONS WILL BE ON THE FINAL EXAM. NOTE: Missing any of the platform presentation classes counts as an “F” for this lab. Your platform is worth 50 points.

11/20 GUIDELINES FOR SECOND CONTENT EXAM (12/3) WILL BE POSTED UNDER “ANNOUNCEMENTS” ON SAKAI

11/ 24 1. AP STYLE QUIZ (50 points) 2. PLATFORM PRESENTATIONS CONTINUE

11/26 THANKSGIVING/NO CLASS

12/1 DEADLINE: REWRITES OF PAPER ONE/TWO DUE (ONLY HARD COPIES ACCEPTED)

Note: If you choose to re-write your first and/or second article for a possible higher grade, a hard copy of this article must be brought to class today. This rewrite must consist of new material.

12/3 **SECOND CONTENT EXAM.** THIS WILL CONSIST OF MATERIAL SINCE THE FIRST CONTENT EXAM (10/22) AND WILL INCLUDE QUESTIONS ON THE PLATFORM PRESENTATIONS. 100 points.

Note: This class does not have a final exam. You will be completely finished by 12/3.

ANY QUESTIONS? Always feel free to email me at cfletch@luc.edu. I'm also happy to meet with you whenever is mutually convenient.

###