

**Loyola University Chicago
School of Communication**

**COMM 205-21W (3498)
Reporting Basics I – Writing and Interviewing
Spring 2024
Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays – 2:45 to 3:35 p.m.
School of Communication, Room 015**

Instructor Contact Information:

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Instructor Office Hours:

By appointment or we can talk before/after class.
Email skeenehan@luc.edu to request an appointment on Zoom.

Course Description and Objectives:

The goal of this course is to teach students the fundamentals of journalism and basics of working in a newsroom or in the production world, including developing news judgment, newsgathering, sourcing, interviewing, writing with objectivity and accuracy, telling a story in a compelling and organized manner and working on deadline. This will be accomplished by reading the textbook, and through lectures, quizzes and writing assignments.

Required Materials:

1. *Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism* (any edition), by Tim Harrower, McGraw Hill.

-There is a PDF available on Sakai in the Resources folder, but you can also purchase a used, physical copy (very inexpensively) on Amazon or eBay. Despite the effect changes in technology have on journalism, this book will always remain relevant and I also highly recommend keeping this book in your permanent collection. This text will be used as a resource throughout this course as a guide on how to approach different story topics and utilize different mediums to tell stories.

2. *The Associated Press Stylebook* (any edition).

-Again, you can purchase a used, inexpensive copy on Amazon, etc., and there is also an online *AP Stylebook* available for an annual fee: <https://store.stylebooks.com/apstylebookonline.html>. You are expected to apply proper AP Style (the spelling, grammar and punctuation used in newsrooms) to your writing assignments and quizzes. You are expected to apply proper AP Style (the spelling, grammar and punctuation used in newsrooms) to your assignments. Also check out the Grammar Girl web site and podcast. She makes learning about these issues fun. This is another resource to keep at your desk in your permanent collection...

- Flash drive, external hard drive, or cloud storage (minimum 4 GB recommended)
- Notebook (a legal pad, steno pad, etc.) for taking notes/interviewing, and a folder for keeping numerous handouts and instruction sheets (I also strongly suggest purchasing a simple clipboard, which comes in very handy if you're working out in the field).
- Additional readings will be provided as the semester progresses through links and PDF files on Sakai in the Resources folder.

Additional Materials:

- An iPhone, Android or any other mobile device that can record video and audio. Also, bring a few different colored pens, a pencil and a highlighter.
- The School of Communication has a variety of equipment that we can use for class-related projects, including monopod kits. This equipment may be checked out through the Owl Lab in SOC 004 or Loyola's Digital Media Lab on the LSC, and your own equipment and devices will likely be suitable for many assignments as well.

Recommended Materials:

- To keep abreast of the news, read local and national newspapers (online reading is also okay), along with Loyola's weekly student newspaper, *The Loyola Phoenix*, to keep up with current events on campus. Our classroom discussions will often touch on the news of the moment.
- Newspapers and news websites. The library offers free access to a great selection of national news outlets, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post*:
<https://libguides.luc.edu/news>

Class Meetings:

Some class meetings (TBD) will be held synchronously (live) on Zoom in lieu of meeting in class during our class time from 2:45 to 3:35 p.m., or will be utilized as workshop days out in the field (TBD).

I am a television producer and sometimes may have to miss class for film shoots. When possible, I will arrange to have a guest instructor on these dates, or for class to meet on Zoom or as a workshop day out in the field. Attendance will be recorded for the Zoom sessions as part of your Participation/Professionalism grade.

***Here is the Zoom link and Meeting ID for classes held remotely via Zoom:**

<https://luc.zoom.us/j/86992071768>

Meeting ID: 8 869 9207 1768

Evaluation and Grading:

Students will be expected to know material covered in lectures, readings and course handouts, and this knowledge will be measured through your assignments and class participation.

Rewrites and Revisions:

If the instructor determines that you need to rewrite or revise an assignment, you have one week to submit a revision for a revised grade of no more than half a letter grade, and the average of the two scores — the original and the rewrite — will be used to calculate the final grade for the assignment.

Format:

- **Short writing summaries** (200 to 300 words) on class readings, videos, etc., are due by the start of class on the Due Dates indicated via Sakai.
- **Format:** Word Doc, Times New Roman font, 12-point, double-spaced in paragraph form with name, date, name of assignment in the top right corner.
- **Assignment titles:** *Please title your assignments using the following format:
Last Name_Assignment Name_Date (Keenehan_Farewell_Short Summary 1_012023).
- **Multimedia Assignments:** For any audio or video submissions, please submit media files via email or Sakai (if it's a large file, you can use Google Drive or WeTransfer to send), along with a written transcript (same Word Doc formatting as short summary assignments above).

Deadlines:

Deadlines are important in journalism, and you will be required to file assignments on time. Late assignments will drop one letter grade each day they are filed past deadline.

Individual Assignment Grade Scale

A: 100-94
A-: 93-90
B+: 89-88
B: 87-83
B-: 82-80
C+ 79-78
C: 77-73
C-: 72-70
D+: 69-68
D: 67-63
D-: 62-60
F: 59-0

Style and Spelling:

It is important that you learn proper AP style, so refer often to your Associated Press Stylebook. Spelling and grammar are equally important. Your grade will suffer if your copy contains style and spelling errors.

Participation and Professionalism:

As part of the class attendance policy, 5 points will be deducted for each missed class and your grade will drop by 5 percent for each class missed after six classes. This class is run like a newsroom, and you should treat it as if it were your job. Therefore, you will be expected to display a respectable level of professionalism by attending class regularly, arriving on the Zoom conference call time, being prepared for class, paying attention during lectures and participating in discussions. Frequent absences will result in a lower grade. Showing up on time also is crucial, since much of the material will be covered in lectures and writing labs. Tardiness will be taken into consideration when computing your final grade. If you're expecting to be absent or late, please email me **before** class, the same as if you had a job. I also consider it an act of academic dishonesty to turn in work for an assignment in this class that you wrote for another class (any semester, any year). You must turn in original work for all class assignments and the use of AI is not permitted for any assignments unless approved by your professor.

Final Project

There will be a final project in lieu of a final exam, which will give you the opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired throughout the semester. Final projects will be due on the day and time of our scheduled final at 4:15 p.m. Thursday, May 2, and presented during the exam period between 4:15 and 6:15 p.m.

Total possible points for the semester: 1,000

- Assignment #1- Campus or City Event Story: 150 points (Due 2/9)
- Assignment #2 - Person on the Street story: 200 points (Due 3/1)
- Assignment #3 - Personality Profile Story: 200 points (Due 4/5)
- Assignment #4/Final Project - Neighborhood Story: 250 points (Final Due 5/2)
- Writing Summaries and Quizzes: 150 points
- Participation/Professionalism: 50 points (5 points deducted for each missed class)

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. Creative topic and approach.

B: Minimal spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Minimal missing information and sources; minimal problems with the lead and organization. Fairly creative topic and approach.

C: Notable number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Noticeable missing information and sources; problems with the lead and organization. Satisfactory creative topic and approach.

D: Significant number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Significant missing information and sources; Significant problems with the lead and organization. Marginal creativity and approach.

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. Minimal or no creativity and approach.

School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. These examples of academic dishonesty apply to both individual and group assignments.

Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;

- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Taking an examination by proxy. Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy.
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

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, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.
- Submitting the same work for credit in two or more classes, even if the classes are taken in different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <https://catalog.luc.edu/undergraduate-academic-standards-regulations/>.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication. Instructors must provide the appropriate information and documentation when they suspect an instance of academic misconduct has occurred. The instructor must also notify the student of their findings and sanction.

The Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml.

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

Using AI on assignments

To maintain our culture of excellence and integrity, students are not to use AI assisted technology in the classroom unless they are specifically authorized to do so by their faculty for an assignment, a test, a quiz, or any deliverable that will be graded.

Loyola also has added an AI identifier to TurnItIn.

Student Accommodations

Loyola University Chicago provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). Professors will receive an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with their professor individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. Please note that in this class, software may be used to audio record class lectures in order to provide equitable access to students with disabilities. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. Recordings are deleted at the end of the semester. For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or SAC@luc.edu.

Title IX Notice of Reporting Obligations for Responsible Campus Partners

As an instructor, I am considered a Responsible Campus Partner ("RCP") under Loyola's [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation](#) (located at www.luc.edu/equity). While my goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, I want to be transparent that as a RCP I am required to report certain disclosures of sexual misconduct (such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner and/or domestic violence, and/or stalking) to the University's [Title IX](#) Coordinator.

As an instructor, I also have a mandatory obligation under Illinois law to report disclosures of or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect (<https://www.luc.edu/hr/legal-notices/mandatedreportingofchildabuseandneglect/>).

The purpose of these reporting requirements is for the University to inform students who have experienced sexual/gender-based violence of available resources and support. Such a report **will not generate a report to law enforcement** (no student will ever be forced to file a report with the police). Furthermore, the University's resources and supports are available to all students even if a student chooses that they do not want any other action taken. Please note that in certain situations, based on the nature of the disclosure, the University may need to take additional action to ensure the safety of the University community. If you have any questions about this policy, you may contact the [Office for Equity & Compliance](#) at equity@luc.edu or 773-508-7766.

If you wish to speak with a confidential resource regarding gender-based violence, I encourage you to call [The Line](#) at 773-494-3810. The Line is staffed by confidential advocates from 8:30am-5pm M-F and 24 hours on the weekend when school is in session. Advocates can provide support, talk through your options (medical, legal, LUC reporting, safety planning, etc.), and connect you with additional resources as needed. More information can be found at luc.edu/coalition or luc.edu/wellness.

Use of Appropriate Names and Pronouns

Addressing one another at all times by using appropriate names and gender pronouns honors and affirms individuals of all gender identities and gender expressions. Misgendering and heteronormative language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth.

If you wish, please share your gender pronouns with me and the class when you introduce yourself; and/or on your name placard; and/or on your Zoom profile. If you do not wish to be called by the name that appears on the class roster or attendance sheet, please let me know. My goal is to create an affirming environment for all students with regard to their names and gender pronouns.

Privacy Statement

Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording.

Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

As Loyola's mission statement holds, "We are Chicago's Jesuit, Catholic University—a diverse community seeking God in all things." Together, as a community rich in diversity, we are called to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith."

Recognizing and appreciating the diverse collection of identities, experiences, perspectives, and abilities of the students, faculty, staff, and community partners with whom we collaborate, the School of Communication commits itself to enriching academic experiences through the advancement of diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive practices.

Managing Life Crises and Finding Support Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: LUC.edu/dos or LUC.edu/csaa; phone number 773-508-8840, email deanofstudents@luc.edu

Loyola COVID-19 Policies

Loyola University Chicago's Health, Safety, and Well-Being Update website helps keep our community informed on health and safety protocols that allow us to remain on campus as we continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19 in our community. This site contains information on required practices for anyone on our campuses as well as resources for students, faculty, and staff.

<https://www.luc.edu/healthsafetyandwellbeing/>

Course Outline:

Please note that the timing and topics are subject to change. Readings should be completed by the Monday of the week they are listed under.

Week #1

January 17-19

Class Introductions, Syllabus Review

- “Farewell, Etaoin Shrdlu.” <https://vimeo.com/127605643#collections>. Watch and write a short summary (100 words or less) – Due Friday, 1/19 via Sakai by the end of class time (10:10 a.m.). Be prepared to discuss the documentary in class.
- Read Chapters 1 and 2, and pages 68-70 (“Where Stories Come From”) and write a short summary on the readings (Due Mon. 1/22)

Week #2

January 22-26

Ch. 1 and 2: The story of journalism, how newsrooms work, newswriting basics

- Ch. 1 and 2 Short summary due Mon. 1/22
- Read the AP Statement of News Values and Principles (Due Wed. 1/24): <https://www.ap.org/about/news-values-and-principles/downloads/ap-news-values-and-principles.pdf>
- Read Chapter 3 and pages 106-107 “Covering Speeches”
- Write a short summary about Chapter 3 – Due Mon. 1/29
- Choose a topic for Campus or City Event Story (Assignment is due 2/9)

Week #3

January 29 – February 2

Ch. 3: Newswriting basics

- Ch. 3 Short Summary due Mon. 1/29
- Read the One-Page Guide to Interviewing by Phil Ponce (available in the Resources Folder on Sakai)
- TBD Guest lecturer Phil Ponce will present and in-class workshop with one of his sons on “Contemporary Issues for Journalists”
- Read Chapter 4 and write a short summary about Chapter 4 – Due 2/5

Week #4

February 5 – 9

Ch. 4: Reporting Basics

- *2/7: Quiz #1 on Chapters 1-4
- *2/9 – DUE: Assignment #1: Campus or City Event Story (750-1000 words)
- Read Chapter 5 and pages 296-299 “The 12-Step Program to Good Writing”
- Write a short summary about Chapter 5 – Due 2/12

Week #5

February 12 – 16

Ch. 5: Covering the news

- Choose a topic for Person on the Street Story (Assignment is due 3/1)
- Read Chapter 6 and write a short summary about Chapter 6 – Due 2/19

Week #6

February 19 – 23

Ch. 6: Beyond breaking news and interviewing

- Read Chapter 7 and pages 326-327 “Webliography”
- Write a short summary about Chapter 7 – Due 2/26

Week #7

February 26 – March 1

Ch. 7: Law and ethics and covering crime

*2/28: Quiz #2 on Chapters 5-7

*3/1 – DUE: Assignment #2: Person on the Street Story (750-1000 words)

Week #8

March 4 - 8

No Classes – Spring Break

Week #9

March 11 – 15

Ch. 8: Online reporting and Writing SEO Headlines

- Choose a topic for Personality Profile Story (Assignment is due 3/27)
- Read Chapter 8 and write a short summary about Chapter 8 – Due 3/13
- Read “A Secretive Hedge Fund is Gutting Newsrooms,” *The Atlantic*: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/11/alden-global-capital-killing-americas-newspapers/620171/> and write 3 questions that you would like to ask the author – Due 3/13
- Read Chapter 9 and write a short summary about Chapter 9 – Due 3/18

Week #10

March 18 – 22

Ch. 9: Broadcast journalism

- Watch *Chicago Tonight* interview w/McKay Coppins: <https://news.wttw.com/2021/10/19/atlantic-looks-inside-alden-global-capital>
- Watch 60 Minutes special about Alden Global Capital: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/local-news-financial-firms-60-minutes-video-2022-02-27/>
- Read Chapter 10
- Write a short summary about Chapter 10 – Due 3/25 (printed)

Week #11

March 25 – 27 (No Class Friday, 3/29 – Easter Holiday)

Ch. 10: Public relations and press releases

*3/27: Quiz #3 on Chapters 8-10 and In-Class Press release assignment – rewrite 2 press releases (handouts given)

Week #12

April 3 – 5 (No class on Monday, 4/1 – Easter Holiday)

Writing for video and television

*4/5 – DUE: Assignment #3: Personality Profile Story (750-1000 words)

- Choose a topic/neighborhood for your Final Project/Neighborhood Story – (Final Due 5/2)

-Watch a 30-minute local newscast of your choice (CBS 2, NBC 5, ABC 7, WGN 9, Fox 32, etc...) and write a short summary breakdown on the stories that are featured. What is the lead story? How much time did the story consume? What other stories fall into the "News" section, and what takes precedent: local stories or national/international stories? How much time is allocated to the News section, compared to Sports and Weather, Teasers/Chat (like when going to a commercial)? Use the pie chart on the top right-hand side of page 179 of Inside Reporting as a reference. (Due 4/8)

Week #13

April 8 – 12

Neighborhood beats and Identifying interviewees

- Read "Development is transforming the Six Corners area," *Chicago Tribune*:

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-biz-six-corners-clarendale-20220816-5f3e4en7rjak7fryeedjhkf3m-story.html>

- Write a short summary/outline about the neighborhood you've selected for your Final Project/Neighborhood Story – Due 4/12

Week #14

April 15-19

Data journalism and digital storytelling tools,

- Read "The Costly Toll of Dead-End Drug Arrests," *Chicago Sun-Times/BGA*:

<https://www.bettergov.org/news/the-costly-toll-of-dead-end-drug-arrests/>

- Write a short summary about the *Sun-Times/BGA* reading – Due 4/19

- Readings (Due 4/22): "The One About A.I.," by *Office Hours Magazine*:

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/one-ai-officehoursmag/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&utm_campaign=share_via

"Liam Callagher Cosigns AI Oasis Album: "I Sound Mega," by Carys Anderson,

Consequence.net: <https://consequence.net/2023/04/aisis-ai-generated-oasis/>

Week #15

April 22-26

AI and Blockchain-based Journalism

Class workshops to prepare for Final Project/Neighborhood Story

Final

Thursday, May 2, 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. in our usual room (SOC Room 015)

* Your Final Project/Neighborhood Story is due at the beginning of the final exam period and you should be prepared to make an informal oral report on your story to share with the class during this final exam session.