

Reporting Basics I: Writing and Interviewing

COMM 205-21W (3036)

FALL 2017

Tuesdays/Thursdays 10-11:15 a.m.

School of Communications Room 003

Course Description: Students will learn the fundamentals of journalistic-style reporting and writing. They'll also learn the basics of working in a newsroom, including newsgathering, sourcing, interviewing and working on deadline. There will be many writing assignments and style/grammar quizzes. We'll also discuss the news of the day, so reading/watching/listening to credible news sources on a daily basis is strongly encouraged.

Instructor contact information:

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Office hours: By appointment (Office location: TBD)

Required texts and materials: “Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism,” third edition. By Tim Harrower. Associated Press Stylebook, local daily and Sunday newspapers (online reading is OK).

Grading: You will take quizzes on your basic knowledge of AP Style — which is the spelling, grammar and punctuation used in newsrooms.

You are expected to apply this style to your writing assignments. More on those later.

You will produce a 100-word analysis of the readings in Harrower. Please write a thoughtful reaction to the readings. What surprised you? What did you find relevant to your own life? Let’s not just do an elementary summary that simply skims the highlights of the material.

You also are expected to keep abreast of the news. Read the Chicago Tribune or Chicago Sun-Times for local news and the New York Times or USA Today for national news. Our classroom discussions will often touch on the news of the moment, and there will be current events quizzes for extra credit.

Students are expected to act in a professional way as if this were a job. That means attending class regularly, arriving on time, being prepared for class and participating in lectures.

Surfing the web or checking your email and Instagram won’t get you very far in this class. Tardiness is a factor in determining your final grade. If you expect to be absent or late, please call or email me — just like you would your editor.

Grading criteria for written work:

A: Publishable work with no spelling, grammatical, punctuation or AP Style errors. The work must be well organized and display the “five Ws” of news writing. Multiple sources and proper attribution are important.

B: Minimal spelling, grammatical, punctuation and AP Style errors; minimal missing information and source information; and minimal problems with the ‘lede’ (the first paragraph) and organization.

C: Notable number of the above errors.

D: Significant problems with the story.

F: Misspelled proper names; other major spelling, grammatical, punctuation and AP Style errors; an almost total lack of information and sources; and severe problems with the lede and organization.

Total possible points for the semester: 1,000

* (100) In-class AP style and grammar quizzes

* (100) Brief summaries of readings from “Inside Reporting.” Max 20 points per summary x five summaries.

* (100) Campus or city event story

* (100) Man/Woman on the Street story

* (400) Police, politics, sports, court stories (100 each)

* (200) Final project

Format: For the brief summaries of “Inside Reporting” chapters, you can turn them in at class. For the writing assignments, it’s a two-part mission: please both bring to class and **email** Word documents of assignments and homework in Times New Roman (that’s the font used in this syllabus), 12-point, in paragraph form with name, date, name of assignment and word count in the top right corner.

Deadlines: Late assignments will drop one letter grade each day they are filed past deadline. No in-class work may be completed out of class due to an absence unless the instructor excuses the absence.

Rewrites: If a student receives a grade of 73 or less, she or he may rewrite the following assignments: Campus or city event story, Man/Woman on the Street story, as well as police, politics, sports, court stories. You will have one week to submit the rewrite. The average of the two scores — the original and the rewrite — will be used to calculate the final grade for the assignment.

Extra credit: You can earn up to 50 points in extra credit. We’ll do current events quizzes each week. These are likely to be five questions a week for 10 weeks throughout the semester. No make-ups.

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

**Academic dishonesty policy (from the School of Communication
Faculty Teaching Handbook, August 2017 edition)**

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.

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;
- 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.

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 <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source> .

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during 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.

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 appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

The office of the Dean 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.

(The School of Communication policy is based entirely on and is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy of the College of Arts & Sciences.)

Class meeting schedule:

(Subject to change, and I'll tell you about any changes)

WEEK 1

AUG. 29: Introduction to the class/each other.

AUG. 31: Be prepared to discuss Ch. 1-2 of Inside Reporting

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WEEK 2: Chapter 3 Newswriting Basics, Part 1

SEPT. 5: The Five W's (and the H)/Learning how to write an Inverted Pyramid news story

What's Due: Summary of Chapter 3 (100 words)

SEPT. 7: Writing story leads.

Grammar Quiz #1: Plurals/possessives

Current Events Quiz #1 (extra credit)

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WEEK 3: *Chapter 3 Newswriting Basics, Part 2*

SEPT. 12: Story structures

Associated Press Style Quiz #1: Abbreviations/acronyms

SEPT. 14: Rewriting/editing

Grammar Quiz #2: Pronouns

Current Events Quiz #2 (extra credit)

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WEEK 4: *Chapter 4 Reporting Basics, Part 1*

SEPT. 19: Interviewing

Associated Press Style Quiz #2: Capitalization

What's due: Summary of Chapter 4 (100 words)

SEPT. 21: Finding stories

Grammar Quiz #3: Subject-Verb Agreement

Current Events Quiz #3 (extra credit)

What's due: Man on the Street interview story

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WEEK 5: *Chapter 5 Covering News, Part 1*

SEPT. 26: Covering police/fire/mayhem

AP Style Quiz #3: Numerals

What's due: Summary of Chapter 5 (100 words)

SEPT. 28: Covering courts/speeches

Grammar Quiz #4: Commas

Current Events Quiz #4 (extra credit)

What's due: Police story

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WEEK 6: Chapter 5 Covering News, Part 2

OCT. 3: Covering meetings/politics

AP Style Quiz #4: Punctuation

OCT. 5: Covering sports/obituaries

Current Events Quiz #5 (extra credit)

What's due: Court story

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WEEK 7

OCT. 10: NO CLASS (MID-SEMESTER BREAK)

OCT. 12: TOUR OF CHICAGO TRIBUNE NEWSROOM

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WEEK 8: Ch. 6 Beyond Breaking News, Part 1

OCT. 17: Features stories

AP Style Quiz #5: Grammar

What's due: Summary of Chapter 6 (100 words)

OCT. 19: Profiles

In-class exercise: Interview & Write profile of classmate

Current Events Quiz #6 (extra credit)

What's due: Politics story

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WEEK 9: *Ch. 6 Beyond Breaking News, Part 2*

OCT. 24: Enterprise Reporting

AP Style Quiz #6: Spelling

OCT. 26: Investigative Reporting

Possible guest speaker

Current Events Quiz #7 (extra credit)

What's due: Campus event story

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WEEK 10: *Ch. 7 Law and Ethics*

OCT. 31: Libel/copyright law

What's due: Summary of Chapter 7 (100 words)

NOV. 2: Seven deadly sins/ethics

Current Events Quiz #8 (extra credit)

What's due: Sports story

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WEEK 11: *Ch. 8-9 Digital/Broadcast Journalism*

NOV. 7: Writing for web/social media

Current Events Quiz #9 (extra credit)

NOV. 9: Potential tour of radio station

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WEEK 12: *Explain final project*

NOV. 14: Assign neighborhoods

NOV. 16: Continue work on final project

Current Events Quiz #10 (extra credit)

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WEEK 13

NOV. 21: NO CLASS (cancelled)

NOV. 23: NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

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WEEK 14

NOV. 28: Continue work on final project

NOV. 30: Continue work on final project

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WEEK 15

DEC. 5: Continue work on final project

DEC. 7: FINAL PROJECT DUE BY 4 P.M.

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WEEK 16

DEC. 12: TBD; FINAL EXAM PERIOD IS 1P-3P

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