

**Loyola University Chicago**  
**Fall 2015**  
**COMM 205-21W Reporting and Writing Across Platforms; SOC 003**  
**MWF 11:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.**

**Jessica R. Brown, Instructor**

**E-mail:** [jbrown7@luc.edu](mailto:jbrown7@luc.edu) (Please allow up to 48 hours for a response to e-mail during the week and do not expect a response during the weekends, even if there is an assignment or exam expected the following week. Remember to include your name and the course on your subject line. Please use your Loyola e-mail account when sending e-mails.)

**Office:** SOC 218      **Phone:** 312-915-7726      **Office Hours:** Tues. 3-5 p.m., Fri. 4-5 p.m.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The goal of this course is to teach students the fundamentals of news writing and reporting across platforms: Print, Online and Broadcast. Students will learn the basics of journalistic writing, interviewing, descriptive techniques, and fact checking, as well as the principles of ethics as it relates to journalism and storytelling. Students will be expected to meet strict deadlines and exercise good news judgment and become intelligent consumers and responsible deliverers of information.

**TEXT AND OTHER MATERIALS**

Harrower, T., *Inside Reporting* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (IR)

*The Associated Press Stylebook*, 2014

Subscription (print and/or digital) to at least two U.S. news publications: Proof required.

External or flash drive

A stapler

Notepad, Pen/Pencil

**GRADING**

100-95	A	94-90	A-	89-87	B+	Quizzes/Midterm (20%)
86-83	B	82-80	B-	79-77	C+	In-class work/Participation/Professionalism (20%)
76-74	C	73-70	C-	69-67	D+	Out-of-class assignments (30%)
66-65	D	Below 65	F			Final Project (30%)

**Plagiarism Statement: Please see attached document**

**SPECIAL NEEDS:** Students are urged to contact me should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have a special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me within the first 2 weeks of the semester so that arrangements can be made with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SSWD website: <<http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>>

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

- 1.) Readings and assignments are due on the day they are listed.
- 2.) No absence will be excused unless it is because of the death of a loved one or serious illness or injury. You will be required to present proof for an excused absence. Proof **MUST** be given no later than your first day back.
- 3.) Unless otherwise instructed, **ALL** students should upload stories on a Word document, typed in **Times New Roman, 12 pt., double-spaced in paragraph form**, with their name, date, name of assignment, and word count in the top right corner to Sakai. If there is no Sakai assignment, the story should be handed in as a hard copy using the same parameters, and stapled in the top left corner. Stories not properly formatted or turned in as requested will **lose 5 points**.
- 4.) Unless otherwise instructed, **NO** work will be accepted via email. However, if you have issues with uploading content to Sakai, you may email me your work instead.
- 5.) **ALL** out-of-class assignments must be uploaded to **turnitin.com** - Class ID: 10327321 / Password: RW2015. Any assignment that is not posted here will **lose 20 points**.
- 6.) You must be present to complete in-class assignments, unless you have an excused absence. In this situation the assignment must be completed by the next class period minus 10 points. If you are absent and miss work, you cannot make it up.
- 7.) **REAL-WORLD ASSIGNMENTS (RWA):** ALL real-world assignments are subject to publication on Hubhub. Students should make it clear to all sources and subjects that their stories are intended for actual publication.
- 8.) Plagiarism **WILL NOT** be tolerated. Please read carefully the Academic Integrity policy provided to you at the start of the semester.
- 9.) **RE-DOs:** Students may re-do **two assignments**, which they receive a grade of **79 or less**. Re-dos may be subject to additional reporting and longer length. These assignments **MAY NOT** have had a built-in draft. You have one week after the original graded work is returned to complete a re-do. Re-dos will receive the **average of the two scores** for both versions. Re-dos **WILL NOT** be accepted without **the original work** being returned as well. **NO** rewrites will be accepted after Nov. 27, even if this date is less than the one week parameter set above. There will be **NO** re-dos on assignments with **missing source lists** or that have issues with **plagiarism**.
- 10.) **DRAFTS:** Several assignments have required drafts. These drafts are pass/fail and worth 10 points. Drafts should be turned in as a hard copy only.
- 11.) **WRITING HELP:** As this is an intensive writing course, you may find that you need additional help. Please visit the Writing Center: <http://www.luc.edu/writing/home/> if necessary. However, journalism is a unique type of writing, and your issues may not necessarily be addressed at the

- Writing Center. If your issue is basic English and sentence construction this resource is fine. If your issue is how to use language and information to tell a news story then see me for more help.
- 12.) Because this is a journalism writing intensive course, your writing will be graded on your ability to communicate via the written word. This includes your use of grammar, spelling, punctuation and AP Style. You will also be graded on journalistic practices, which will be detailed in the text, handouts and in-class discussions.
- 13.) **QUIZZES:** Each quiz will be worth 20 points. **I will drop the lowest quiz grade.** They begin promptly at the start of class and students will have approximately **7-10 minutes** to complete them. There will be no make-up quizzes. Students may use their AP stylebooks, but no other resources. Quizzes will consist of current events, general knowledge, AP style, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and writing.
- 14.) **SOURCE LISTS:** A source list is required for all **real-word** stories where you have **quoted or paraphrased** a person. This list is similar to a reference list one would use at the end of an essay or report, but it is strictly for personal communication. The list **MUST** include the sources' full name, title/occupation, place of residence and contact information. If the source is a student you should supply the major and year in school and what school they attend. Contact information may be a phone number or email address. Journalists maintain source lists so they can locate their subjects if more information is needed later, or to prove that they exist in the event an ethical issue in reporting arises. A missing source list will be an automatic **20-point deduction**.
- 15.) **PARTICIPATION:** We will regularly discuss current events and students will be asked to contribute or even lead discussions. You will be expected to take part. This graded portion will also include general, daily contributions to course discussions and activities.
- 16.) **PROFESSIONALISM\*\*** will be assessed on these criteria: being on time for class; not leaving class before it's been adjourned; being disruptive or rude to others; texting; gaming; playing games; using social networks; using technology or devices for purposes other than our course work; being deceptive about absences, missed work, or other course issues. I will make note of any of these issues and adjust this grade accordingly.

## **THE COURSE (Subject to change)**

### **Week 1: Course Overview; Journalism Basics**

Aug. 24 – The syllabus; The job of the journalist; Yesterday's news and today's challenges

Aug. 26 – What is News?

*Reading: IR introduction, chapter 1-2*

EXERCISE: Why is this story newsworthy?

Aug. 28 – The structure of a news story

EXERCISE: The anatomy of a news story

*Reading: IR chapter 3*

## **Week 2: AP Style; Writing Leads**

Aug. 31 – Using the AP stylebook

PRACTICE: AP Style

*Reading: AP Style A-D*

Sept. 2 – Working with Leads

Sept. 4 – **Quiz 1**; PRACTICE: Writing Leads

**ASSIGNMENT: Eight leads, due Sept. 7**

## **Week 3: Interviewing; Briefs**

Sept. 7 – **DUE: Eight Leads**

How to conduct an interview; sourcing

*Reading: IR chapter 4; AP Style E-H*

Sept. 9 – EXERCISE: Man on the street, due at end of class

*Reading: AP Style I-M*

Sept. 11 – **Quiz 2**; Working with briefs

**ASSIGNMENT: Two Briefs, due Sept. 14**

## **Week 4: Writing Quotes and Attribution; Covering Tragedies**

Sept. 14 – Picking the right quote; Writing proper attributions

**DUE: Two Briefs**

Sept. 16 – **Quiz 3**; Accidents, Disasters and Fires

Dissect an accident/disaster story

*Reading: IR chapter 5; AP Style E-H*

Sept. 18 – EXERCISE: Writing an accident story, due at end of class

**ASSIGNMENT: Writing a news story from an interview, due Sept. 22**

## **Week 5: Meeting, Speeches and Events:**

*RWA: Covering an event/speech/meeting; due Oct. 12*

Sept. 21 – **DUE: News story w/ interview**

Dissect a speech/meeting story

*Reading: AP Style N-S*

Sept. 23 – EXERCISE: Asking the right questions

Sept. 25 – **Quiz 4**; EXERCISE: Writing a meeting story, due at end of class

## **Week 6: Feature Reporting**

Sept. 28 – Profile structure

EXERCISE: Dissect a profile story

*Reading: IR chapter 6; AP Style T-Z*

Sept. 30 – EXERCISE: 10 Questions/Partner Interviews

*RWA: Partner Profile due Oct. 10, draft due Oct. 8 (working lead Oct. 2)*

Oct. 2 – Don't get sued, or fired, or both!

*Reading: IR chapter 7, AP Style libel*

## **Week 7: Law and Ethics; Mid-term**

Oct. 5(6) – NO CLASS; FALL BREAK

Oct. 7 – Continued work on assignment: *DUE Partner Profile draft*

Oct. 9 – **Mid-term**; *DUE: RWA Partner Profile*

## **Week 8: Opinion; Reviews**

Oct. 12 – *DUE: Last day to turn in RWA event/speech/meeting*

Writing editorials, columns and reviews

EXERCISE: Dissect an opinion piece

*Reading: AP Style business and sports*

Oct. 14 – EXERCISE: Find facts to support an opinion

*RWA: Opinion, draft due Oct. 19, final story due Oct. 23*

Oct. 16 – EXERCISE: Set the scene; due at end of class

## **Week 9: Digital Journalism**

Oct. 19 – *DUE: RWA Opinion draft*

*Reading: IR chapter 8*

Writing for the Web and Alternative Story Forms

Oct. 21 – **Quiz 6**; EXERCISE: Surf the Web; Craft ALT ideas

Oct. 23 – **DUE: RWA Opinion**

**RWA: ALT/Graphic Story, due Oct. 30**

**Week 10: Broadcast Journalism**

Oct. 26 – Writing for the ear

*Reading: IR chapter 9; AP Style social media*

EXERCISE: The anatomy of a broadcast story news story

Oct. 28 – EXERCISE: Stand-ups Part I

Oct. 30 – EXERCISE: Stand-ups Part II

**DUE: RWA: ALT/Graphic Story**

**Week 11: Broadcast Journalism continued/ Final Project**

Nov. 2 – EXERCISE: Print lead v. Broadcast leads

Nov. 4 – **Quiz 7**; **RWA: Final project detailed, plan due Nov. 9**

Nov. 6 – **\*\*Digital Ethics Symposium.** Today we will attend the afternoon session of the symposium.

Please be in Regents Hall (16<sup>th</sup> floor Lewis Towers) by 11:30; even earlier if you can. You may write an event story for extra credit. Please use the same parameters as the RWA used earlier in the semester.\*\*

**Week 12: Follow-up stories**

Nov. 9– **Quiz 8**; **RWA: Final project package plan/ budget line(s) due**

Nov. 11 – EXERCISE: Writing a story with updates

Nov. 13 – EXERCISE: Writing a story with updates continued, due at end of class

**Week 13: Public Relations**

Nov. 16 – What is Public Relations?

*Reading: IR chapter 10*

EXERCISE: Locate a news story based on a press release

Nov. 18 – EXERCISE: Write a story from a press release, due at end of class

Nov. 20 – EXERCISE: Man on the street II

**Week 14: Final Project Work**

Nov. 23 – Photos and captions

Nov. 25-27 – NO CLASS; THANKSGIVING BREAK

**Week 15: Final Project; Final Exam Review**

Nov. 30 – **RWA final project draft due (2 copies)**

Dec. 2 – Review for final

Dec. 4 – **DUE: RWA final project**

**FINAL EXAM:** Monday, Dec. 7, 1-3 p.m.

**ASSIGNMENTS: details and due dates (subject to change): In-class work may not posted below.**

**Sept. 7 – Eight leads; 80 points**

Using the examples highlighted on pages 46-47, write eight different leads on the news items provided to you in class. Please be sure to indicate the type of lead above the text for each one. Turn in a hard copy and upload to Sakai.

**Sept. 14 – Two Briefs; 50 points**

See Handout. Turn in a hard copy and upload to Sakai.

**Sept. 21 – Writing from an interview; Word count = 250-300**

Based on the lessons about interviewing, writing quotes, sources and attribution, craft a story using the transcription provided to you on the handout.

**Oct. 7. 9 – Partner Profile (w/draft), Word count = 350-400**

HARDCOPY & SAKAI: You will be partnered with a fellow student to write a profile on one another. You must interview both your partner and one other source who can speak intelligently about the subject. From interviews, and other research, this profile should highlight a **single angle** about this person that makes them **newsworthy**. A profile is NOT a resume or an attempt to tell someone's life story in 400 words, as that would be impossible. Focus and edit yourself. A working lead is **due Oct. 2**.

**Oct. 12 – Event/Speech/Meeting story; 100 points; Word count = 300-350; 100 points**

HARDCOPY & SAKAI & TURNITIN.COM. For this course students must cover a **real-world** event, speech or meeting and report on it. **Ten extra credit points** will be given to topics relating to **social justice, OR, the media**. Students may turn this assignment in any time up until class time on this date. Students **MUST** also hand in with their story **proof of the event**. This can be a flyer, or a print out of the event online or from an email. The event must take place **between Sept. 22-Oct. 13**. The news story **MUST** include quotes from the speaker(s) and **two** other sources, most likely audience members. You should get well-rounded, diverse quotes from subjects. Well-written, timely stories may be asked to post to **Hubbub**. These stories will also receive 10 points extra credit.

**Oct. 19/23 – Opinion (w/draft); 100 points; Word count = 400-450**

DRAFT = HARDCOPY ONLY; FINAL = SAKAI. Topic TBD. This column has a required draft, which is worth 10 points.

■ The draft, due Oct. 19, should clearly indicate which of the three styles (see page 135) you will use based on the quality of your writing. It should be evident what your voice is, what your topic is and what research you have done to help you craft your opinion.

**Oct. 30 – ALT/Graphics; 100 points; Word count = N/A**

FINAL = HARDCOPY & SAKAI. For this assignment you will choose a topic to be determined and craft a short-form (aka Alternative Story Form). More details will come later.

**Nov. 9; Nov. 30 & Dec. 4 – Final Project; Word count = 500-600**

HARDCOPY, SAKAI & HUBBUB: The final project will be a feature on a topic to be determined once it is formally assigned. The final project will be a real-world assignment, in which the final product will be posted onto Hubbub. The final product will consist of the following elements:

- A 500-600 word story.
- A minimum of three quoted or paraphrased interview sources.
- An ALT (graphic or sidebar). This can include a photo package of at least 3 images, or a video produced by the student. Video must be submitted to YouTube in order to be posted on Hubbub.
- **Nov. 9: Package plan/budget line (60 points):** On this date you must turn in a hardcopy that details your 1.) topic written as a proper lead; 2.) the type of people or names of people you want interview; 3.) the URL of other sources you may use to gather more information, 4.) What/Who you will photograph, video; 5.) three options for a graphic and/or sidebar; 6.) four link options.
- **Nov. 30: Draft one:** On this date students should bring two hard copies of their written story. ALL of the reporting should be completed at this stage and at least HALF of the story should be written. Students may be asked to share their progress with the entire class.

**FINAL EXAM:** Monday, Dec. 7., 1-3 p.m.