

Loyola University Chicago
COMM 205-01W — Reporting Basics 1: Writing and Interviewing
Fall 2018
Monday 4:15-6:45 p.m.
Loyola Lake Shore Campus
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Prof. Linze Rice
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Office hours & contact:

Office hours are after class or by appointment only. Email is the best way to reach me, however you may contact me via cell phone, too. Please first text me to identify yourself.

Course description

This course examines current issues in U.S. journalism with strong emphasis on developing skills in news reporting, interviewing, and writing. This is a **Writing-Intensive Course** and involves a number of writing assignments, however, no writing assignment will be longer than 400-500 words.

The goal of this course is to teach students the fundamentals of journalism: AP style, basic research methods, developing news judgement, learning to write clearly, accurately and objectively on deadline, how to tell compelling and impactful stories, and understanding ethical, legal and social issues. Students will gain understanding of media literacy, learn how to responsibly tell the news, and get insight into journalism's changing nature. This will be accomplished through lecture and discussion, fieldwork, assigned reading, writing assignments, exercises, and quizzes.

Outcomes: News Judgment; Writing Concisely and Clearly; Writing on Deadline; AP Style; Interviewing Techniques; Grammar, Spelling & Punctuation; Ethics & Legal Issues; Basic Research Methods

Required Materials

2018 Associated Press Style Book

Inside Reporting by Tim Harrower, 3rd Edition

Students will periodically be required to bring the current day's *Chicago Tribune* or *Sun-Times* to class.

Students will also be required to read articles from *Block Club Chicago* and other local news sources

Additional Materials

Students should always have a reporter's notebook and a regular notebook, as well as a pen with them. Bringing phones to class is encouraged, particularly those with camera and recording functions.

Snack policy: Please feel free to bring a snack or light dinner to class.

Grading

Students will be expected to know material covered in lectures, handouts, readings and major news stories in the daily newspapers, and this knowledge will be measured through outside writing assignments, in-class writing, editing exercises and news quizzes.

Total possible points for the semester: 1,000.

- **Outside Assignments: 480 pts**
- **In-class Assignments: 180**
- **Quizzes: 40**
- **Final: 250**
- **Professionalism/Participation: 50**

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 and organization.

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

Rewrites

Students may rewrite the Man on the Street, event/meeting coverage or radio broadcast stories if she or he receives a C- or less. The average of the two scores will be used.

Deadlines

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

The instructor does not accept assignments by e-mail without prior approval.

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 newspaper 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.

Writing papers

Papers should be written using Times New Roman 12 pt font with standard margins.

Professionalism

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 time, being prepared for class, paying attention during lectures and participating in discussions. Texting and fiddling with the computer will not be tolerated. Frequent absences will result in a lower grade. Showing up on time also is crucial, since much material will be covered in lectures. Tardiness will be taken into consideration when computing your final grade. If you're expecting to be absent or late, please call or email me **before** class, the same as if you had a job.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. 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. 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.

A complete description of the School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <http://www.luc.edu/soc/Policy.shtml>

Students with disabilities

Any student with a learning disability that requires accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentiality to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate those needs in the best way

possible, given the constraint of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

Schedule — subject to change

Week 1: Course Overview; Journalism Basics

Aug. 27 – The syllabus; The job of the journalist; What is News?;

EXERCISES: Why is this story newsworthy?; The anatomy of a news story

Reading: IR introduction, chapter 1-3

ASSIGNMENT: 100 word summary on what you found most interesting in IR Chapters 1-3. It doesn't have to read like a news story, but should be focused and succinct. (20 pts)

Week 2: Sept. 3 — LABOR DAY NO CLASS

Week 3: AP Style; Writing Leads

Guest lecturer/teacher: Mauricio Peña - Reporter at Block Club Chicago

Sept. 10 – Using the AP stylebook; Working with leads

EXERCISE: AP Style practice; Writing Leads

Reading: AP Style A-D

ASSIGNMENT: Eight leads: Using AP style, write and rewrite eight leads from materials provided. (80 pts). Buy a copy of the Chicago Tribune or Chicago Sun-Times and circle examples of AP style from sections A-D in the paper's front section. (10 pts)

Week 4: The first 5 'grafs and the structure of news; Briefs

Sept. 17 – Going into detail about the basics of story writing; Working with briefs (practice)

EXERCISE: Write a five-paragraph story in class (20 pts)

Quiz: AP Style A-D (10 pts)

Reading: AP Style E-M

Week 5: Interviewing

Sept. 24 – Interviewing basics

EXERCISE: Write a 250 word story after interviewing a classmate. Remember to stay focused on a specific angle, and don't try to force in her or his life story. This is on deadline. (20 pts)

AP style quiz E-M (10 pts)

Reading: IR chapter 4 and 5

ASSIGNMENT: Man on the Street story: Writing a news story on a chosen topic and interview three interview sources (**you must include your source list**) who are quoted and/or paraphrased. Include at least one photo with caption as well. (100 pts)

Week 6: Covering meetings, speeches and events; Breaking news

Oct. 1 – Discuss how to cover public events and breaking news; learning to ask the right questions

EXERCISES: Writing a breaking news story on deadline (15 pts); Meeting/event coverage practice (15 pts)

AP Quiz I-M (10 pts)

Reading: AP Style T-Z; IR Chapter 6

Real world assignment: 400 word story covering an event/speech/meeting; due Oct. 15 (100 pts)

Week 7: Oct. 8 — FALL BREAK NO CLASS

Week 8: Feature reporting + Other types of stories

Oct. 15 – Dissecting a profile structure and looking at other kinds of stories, like sports and opinion

EXERCISE: Write a column, due by the end of class (20 pts)

AP Quiz T-Z (10 pts)

Reading: IR chapter 7

ASSIGNMENT: Find 5 real-life examples of the types of “trouble” described on page 143 and write a short explanation as to the stories you chose, and how the situation could have turned been avoided (if at all) (20 pts)

Week 9: Law and Ethics, Public Relations, Bias

Oct. 22 – Discussing libel, bias and other ethical standards; public relations

EXERCISE: Ethics exercise; Write a story from a press release, due by end of class (20 pts)

Reading: IR chapter 8

ASSIGNMENT: Find a recent local story that was covered by at least 3 different outlets in Chicago (TV, print [Tribune/Sun-Times], digital [Block Club Chicago, City Bureau, Chicago Magazine, etc], radio) and compare the headlines, photos and writing style. Prepare a 200-300 word summary on the differences between them and your observations. (20 pts)

Week 10: Social media and digital journalism

Oct. 29 – How to use social media for reporting; benefits and pitfalls of social media; thinking digitally

EXERCISES: Put together a story using social media and craft social media posts to share the story on social media and in email (20 pts)

Reading: IR chapter 9

Week 11: Broadcast journalism

Nov. 5 – Writing and reporting news for TV and radio

EXERCISE: Write a broadcast radio script based on a news event (20 pts)

ASSIGNMENT: Create a broadcast story, including a one-minute digitally recorded broadcast and script (100 pts)

Week 12: Data & Visual Storytelling; Alternative Story Formats

Nov. 12 – Math for journalists; Telling stories in non-traditional ways; Supplementing stories

EXERCISE: Data/visual, ASF story ideas (10 pts)

ASSIGNMENT: Find 3 current examples of ASF stories; create an ASF to supplement a story you've already written for class (30 points)

Week 13: Follow-up stories and beat reporting

Nov. 19 – Expounding on earlier stories, getting to “work” the beat; discussing final project

EXERCISE: Pick topic for final project

ASSIGNMENT: Create final project package plan/budget (20 pts)

Week 14: Journalism today

Nov. 26 – Issues dealing with modern journalism, people-first writing, crime writing, journalism as activism

EXERCISE: Rewriting leads and headlines for today

Week 15: Final consultations

Dec. 3 — Work on final project, one-on-one consultations on direction of story and opportunity to ask questions/discuss anything. (20 pts)

Week 16: FINAL; 4:15 p.m.

Dec. 10 — Final project due, 500 words. Written story with one-minute radio story, supplemental ASF, photo, data and three sources. Come prepared to discuss your findings and what you went through to get the story. (250 pts)