

SYLLABUS

ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM
(ENVS-398-01W, CMUN 372-01W)
T/Th 10-11:15
Mundelein 408
Dr. Fletcher (email cfletch@luc.edu)

THIS SYLLABUS HAS THREE PARTS:

- 1. PART ONE PRESENTS DEADLINES FOR TESTS AND ASSIGNMENTS. IT ALSO GIVES THE PERCENTAGE VALUE FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT AND THE OVERALL GRADING SYSTEM.**
- 2. PART TWO PRESENTS THE COURSE OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT.**
- 3. PART THREE PRESENTS THE CLASS SCHEDULE.**

THIS FORMAT SHOULD HELP YOU ACCESS INFORMATION QUICKLY BY SCROLLING TO “Part One, Part Two, etc.” It also will keep you on top of deadline dates, since they are listed first. You might want to copy “PART ONE: DEADLINES AND GRADING” and “PART THREE: CLASS SCHEDULE” to your computer or other device.

IMPORTANT: You are responsible for knowing the contents of the syllabus. The rules and regulations, especially as they relate to academic integrity (See “Plagiarism” in Part Two) apply whether you have reviewed them or not.

YOU SHOULD CHECK THE SYLLABUS EVERY WEEK TO KEEP ON TOP OF READINGS AND DEADLINES. ALSO, CHECK SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS OR YOUR EMAIL FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS.

PART ONE: DEADLINES, IMPORTANT DATES, AND GRADING TEMPLATE

9/4 and every class with readings (unless noted otherwise): BRIEF QUIZ ON THE DAY'S READINGS. NOTE: Your lowest THREE grades on the quizzes will be dropped at the end of the semester. This does not apply to the Grammar/Punctuation Quiz.

9/27 "ASK AN EXPERT REPORT." PRESENTATION AND WRITTEN SYNOPSIS DUE.

10/4 NO CLASS (Professor at Society of Environmental Journalists Conference)

10/8-10/9 FALL BREAK

10/11 GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION QUIZ

10/16 UNIT TEST ONE

10/19 FARMERS MARKET FEATURE ARTICLE due by 5 p.m.

11/2 Deadline to withdraw from class with "W" grade

11/6-11/12 HUNGER WEEK

11/8 UNIT TEST TWO

11/16 HUNGER WEEK EVENT ARTICLE DUE.

11/20 DEADLINE TO SUBMIT REWRITES FOR LABS AND ARTICLE ONE.

NOTE: IF YOU ONLY HAVE ONE OR TWO LABS YOU WISH TO REWRITE, YOU CAN DO THESE ON 12/4.

11/29 PITCH PRESENTATION IN CLASS

11/30 PITCH LETTER DUE by 5 p.m.

12/4 HUNGER WEEK RE-WRITE DUE. HARD COPY. OPTIONAL LAB RE-WRITE.

12/6 UNIT TEST THREE

NOTE: THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM IN THIS CLASS.

GRADE PERCENTAGES:

Quizzes on readings: 10 percent

“Ask An Expert” presentation and synopsis (10 percent)

Grammar/Punctuation Quiz: 10 percent

Farmers’ Market Article: 10 percent

Unit Tests One, Two, and Three (30 percent; 10 percent each)

Labs: 10 percent

Hunger Week Article: 10 percent

Environmental Pitch Presentation and Letter: 10 percent

NOTE: Participation/conduct can raise or lower your grade up to one full letter grade. (See below).

HOW GRADES ARE CALCULATED:

- ✓ You’ll receive guidelines, posted on Sakai Announcements, for some in-class work, for your outside articles, and for the three unit tests.
- ✓ You’ll be given a certain number of points for each element of your assignments, given in the guidelines posted on SAKAI. These points will be put on a curve and then converted into a letter grade.
- ✓ **Late assignments** are graded down 10 points for every day they are late, unless you have a documented reason for the late assignment. They’re graded down 5 points for not making the time deadline (e.g., 5 p.m.) of the deadline day.

- ✓ Any assignment that contains a factual error, meaning a major mistake, as in misspelling the name of a source or the subject of your assignment, or giving wrong information, earns a zero.
- ✓ Your final grade will be an average of all your letter grades on assignments.

REWRITES: Your Farmers Market and Hunger Week articles and lab assignments may be re-written for a new grade. For the Farmers Market and Hunger Week article, you must cover another environmental event; for lab rewrites, you must get a new lab assignment from me. Rewrites may be submitted at any time during the semester as hard copies with the original paper attached. Check with me on how to do them. The **absolute** deadline for getting them in is 11/20 for labs and Farmers Market and 12/4 for Hunger Week. If your rewrite grade is lower than your original paper, you earn the higher grade. Rewrites are totally optional.

HOW ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION/CONDUCT IN CLASS CAN AFFECT YOUR GRADE

I. ATTENDANCE

I don't formally take points off for missing class. **However, you should know that missing classes is likely to have a negative impact that will affect your performance on presentations, written assignments, and tests.**

You are responsible for all the material in lectures and labs. Much of the material on the three unit tests will be from the lectures and labs. It's in your best interest to take copious notes on these. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes from another student. You cannot make up missed quizzes. However, I drop the three lowest grades on the quizzes on the readings at the end of the semester. NOTE: The Grammar/Punctuation Quiz is not considered a quiz on the readings, so that grade cannot be dropped. However, I will offer a re-do opportunity on this quiz toward the end of the semester.

II. CLASS PARTICIPATION/CONDUCT

NOTE: Participation/conduct counts. Your grade may be raised or lowered by as much as one full letter grade, depending on your participation/conduct. This consists of regular, constructive contributions in class and attentive, non-distracting conduct in class. The following behaviors can lower your grade by as much as one full letter grade: repeatedly being late, leaving during class without a documented reason (See note following this), doing other work in class, texting or viewing texts in class, using a laptop or other device without a documented reason, or rudeness to others in class.

NOTE: LOYOLA POLICY: IF YOU HAVE A CHRONIC CONDITION THAT MAY REQUIRE YOUR LEAVING DURING CLASS, OR A CONDITION REQUIRING SOME ASSISTANCE, YOU CAN OBTAIN AND BRING THE FORM FROM SSWD (SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES) TO THE PROFESSOR BY WEEK THREE. YOU MUST HAVE AN SSWD FORM TO BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE DURING CLASS, OR TO RECEIVE SPECIAL ASSISTANCE. YOU CANNOT CLAIM TO NEED TO LEAVE CLASS, OR DELAY ASSIGNMENTS IF YOU HAVE A CHRONIC CONDITION (LIKE MIGRAINES) WITHOUT AN SSWD FORM. PERMISSION TO LEAVE DURING CLASS DATES FORWARD FROM THE SSWD DATE. IT CANNOT BE APPLIED RETROACTIVELY. ASK ME IF YOU'RE UNSURE HOW TO OBTAIN SSWD ASSISTANCE..

PART TWO: COURSE DESCRIPTION

The mission of environmental journalism is to raise public awareness about environmental news and issues. It is about being ethical, accurate, fair, and clear, whether reporting, investigating, or advocating for change.

The objective of this course is to enable students to find, report, and present these challenging stories. Guidelines for each assignment will be discussed in class and posted on SAKAI "Announcements" well ahead of each deadline. We will start with exercises that help you to observe closely, ask effective questions, and learn where and how to find reliable sources.

Learning to write clearly and concisely for print and broadcast can be used by anyone with a concern for the environment and a need to get a message across effectively.

Required textbooks:

- Covering the Environment, Wyss, 2nd ed.

- Writing and Reporting for the Media, Bender, 11th ed.
- NOTE: If you rent these from LU's Bookstore, you have the option of buying it at any point during the semester.

Recommended as background:

- Healing Earth, free online.

CLASS FORMAT:

We meet twice a week. Usually, we'll have lecture with discussion with a brief quiz on the readings on Tuesday. However, any day with readings will have a quiz.

FOR TUESDAYS, THIS IS A SCREEN-FREE ZONE. NO LAPTOP USE IN CLASS UNLESS YOU HAVE WRITTEN PERMISSION.

FOR THURSDAYS-- WHEN YOU SEE THAT WE HAVE A WRITING LAB ON THURSDAY, MAKE SURE TO BRING IN YOUR LAPTOP.

OFFICE HOURS:

My office is at WTC, but I'm teaching at LSC this semester. I can meet with you after this class on T/Th until 1 p.m., and after 2:15 p.m. Since I don't have a regular office here, contact me at cfletch@luc.edu and we'll set up a place to meet, either in Mundelein or the Information Commons. If you want to meet at another time, let me know. Always feel free to email me with questions.

NOTE: If you're a transfer student, let me know if you'd like to be set up with a student mentor.

PART THREE: CLASS SCHEDULE

NOTE: Deadlines for your presentations, articles, and for exams are given in the following schedule and ALSO in your DEADLINES section, Part One.

Changes in the schedule may be made, depending on guests' availability and our progress through the material.

Readings should be completed and ready for discussion by Tuesday each week, and for Thursday, if that date has readings. Some readings may be added during the semester if they're particularly helpful.

The more you read journalistic style, the better you're able to practice it. A good habit is to read the Science Section of the *New York Times* every Tuesday. It usually has a number of environmental articles. As a Loyola student, you have free access to the NYT.

Note: You do not have to read/follow the directives in the “Study Guide” at end of each chapter.

NOTE: Readings are due on date indicated. STARTING ON 9/4, a brief quiz will be given at start of each class on the readings.

Quizzes can't be made up, but I will drop your three lowest grades on the readings quizzes at the end of the semester.

WEEK ONE: OVERVIEW. WHAT IS JOURNALISM? WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM?

8/28 Introduction. Syllabus highlights. **Important:** You're responsible for knowing the contents of the syllabus. In class: Jot down what you especially want to learn how to do in this class/questions you have about the class.

8/30 **Before class, read:**

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 1, to p. 6. STOP at “The News As A Business.” Resume with sidebar (green box) on p. 9. Study Figure 1-5, p. 11 (You'll use this format in and outside class).
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 2 (Read through “Reporter's Guide to Accuracy,” p.23)
- ✓ Excerpt from The Society of Environmental Journalists' site:
<http://www.sej.org/about-sej/vision-and-mission> (Just read the first two paragraphs on “Vision” and “Mission”).

NOTE: This site can be tremendously helpful to you in the future.

In class:

- ✓ Meet with IES representatives on how to use social media as part of your coverage of Loyola's Farmers Market.
- ✓ Discuss readings.
- ✓ View NYT front page. Analyze news characteristics.
- ✓ Highlight SPJ's Code of Ethics.

**WEEK TWO. WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM?
HOW DO YOU FIND AND REPORT ON STORIES? HOW DO
YOU ORGANIZE DIFFERENT TYPES OF STORIES?**

NOTE: QUIZZES ON THE READINGS START TODAY, 9/4:

9/4 Before class, read:

- ✓ Wyss, Chapter 1
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 9: STOP at "The Narrative Style," p. 194.
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 17 to p. 352. Stop at "Types of Feature Stories."
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 7, through "The Reporter's Guide to Writing Leads," p. 151
- ✓ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/21/insider/information-freedom-reporters-pruitt.html>

In class:

- ✓ Discuss "Ask An Expert" assignment (due 9/27)
- ✓ The Big Three skills of reporting.
- ✓ Story organization.
- ✓ View these stories:
- ✓ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/17/climate/india-heat-wave-summer.html>
- ✓ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/19/climate/endange-red-species-act-changes.html>

9/5 GUIDELINES FOR: “Ask an Expert” presentation and synopsis will be posted on SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS.

NOTE: Your lab on Thursday will be on writing news leads. Make sure you review Chapter 1, p. 11 (for news story format) and Chapter 7 before the lab. Starting Thursday, 5 points will be taken off any paper with incorrect slug, name, date order.

9/6 Lab. Lead writing exercises

WEEK THREE. HOW DO YOU WRITE IN JOURNALISTIC STYLE? WHAT IS MEANT BY OBJECTIVITY IN JOURNALISM? GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION.

9/11 Before class, read:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 3.
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 4
- ✓ Bender, Appendix B, pp. 455-457
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 6, p. 111-112 (Stop at “Reporting Grief”).

In class:

- ✓ Guests from IES will talk about how to use social media to highlight LU’s Farmers Market (This assignment will count as points added to your Farmers Market article).
- ✓ Discuss how to cover LU Farmers’ Market for your article: what to look for, how to take notes.
- ✓ Discuss readings

9/12 Your social media deadline for Farmers Market will be emailed to you.

9/13 No reading.

In class: Finish discussing readings from Tuesday.

LAB: Grammar/Punctuation/Common Mistakes pre-quiz.
Observation exercise.

The pre-quiz will be corrected and given back to you, but you won't receive a grade on it (other than knowing how many errors you made); the goal is to get feedback so you learn what elements you need to work on for Grammar/Punctuation Quiz on 10/11.

WEEK FOUR: WHAT DO JOURNALISTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT REPORTING SCIENCE? WHAT DO SCIENTISTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WRITING JOURNALISM? HOW TO ORGANIZE AND WRITE YOUR FEATURE STORY ON FARMERS MARKET.

9/18 Before class, read:

- Wyss, Chapters 3 and 4 (SKIP "Journalists Doing Science," p. 61-62). RESUME with "Understanding Scale, p. 62 to end of chapter.
- Bender, Chapters 8 and 10
- Bender, Chapter 9, starting with "Explain the Unfamiliar," p. 199 through p. 204.

In class: Discuss readings and how to organize and how to write your Farmers Market article. Emphasis on lead, description, and correct journalistic attribution.

9/20 Lab

9/21: GUIDELINES FOR FARMERS' MARKET ARTICLE (DUE 10/19) WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS. NOTE: YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ASSIGNMENT POINTS WILL BE ADDED TO YOUR ARTICLE.

LIST OF "COMMON WRITING ERRORS" WILL ALSO BE POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS. (QUESTIONS ON THESE WILL BE INCLUDED ON GRAMMAR QUIZ OF 10/11)

WEEK FIVE: BROADCAST AND ONLINE JOURNALISM

9/25 Before class, read:

- Wyss, Chapter 12

- Bender, Chapter 12, p. 253-257 STOP at “Guidelines for Copy Preparation.”
- Wyss, Chapter 13
- Bender, Chapter 13, p. 273, “Formatting Stories for Digital Media” to end of chapter.

In class:

- **STUDENTS WILL GET BACK THEIR GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION PRE-QUIZ. DISCUSS COMMON ISSUES.**
- **Lab on broadcast writing leads.**

9/27 **DEADLINE:** “Ask An Expert” presentation. Email me your synopsis by 5 p.m. (even if you don’t get to present today; failure to do so results in 10 points off assignment). TAKE NOTES. Questions about the content of the presentations will be on the unit test on 10/16.

9/28 STUDY GUIDELINES FOR

- ✓ **GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION AND COMMON MISTAKES QUIZ (10/11) AND FOR**
- ✓ **UNIT TEST ONE (10/16) WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

WEEK SIX: FOCUS: GETTING IDEAS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STORY. YOUR ETHICAL ROLE AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALIST: FAIRNESS AND ADVOCACY

10/2 Before class, read:

- ✓ Wyss, Chapter 14. SKIP “Taking Sides,” p. 222-223. RESUME with “Defining the Task, p. 223 to end of chapter.

In class:

- ✓ Finish “Ask An Expert” presentations.
- ✓ Discuss and work on Article/Podcast ideas for presentation later this semester.

- ✓ Jot down (and type up if you have time) three ideas you have for a potential LU or local environmental story. This can be about a problem, an issue, an opportunity, or best practice you've noticed. At this point, it might just be a question. These won't be graded. I'll give you feedback to help you get your pitch presentation idea for later in the semester.

10/4 **NO CLASS.** Professor will be at Society of Environmental Journalists Conference in Flint.

WEEK SEVEN: MIDTERM BREAK AND GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, COMMON MISTAKES QUIZ.

10/9 MIDTERM BREAK/NO CLASS

10/11 GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION QUIZ (10 percent of grade)

WEEK SEVEN: UNIT TEST ONE. INTERVIEWING SKILLS. FARMERS MARKET ARTICLE DUE.

10/16: UNIT TEST ONE

10/18 FOCUS: JOURNALISTIC INTERVIEWING BASICS. INTERVIEWING FOR DIFFERENT PLATFORMS. INTERVIEWING SCIENTISTS, REGULATORS AND ADVOCATES.

Before class, read:

- Wyss, Chapter 5
- Bender, Chapter 11, box titled "Steps in preparing for an interview," p. 235. Then go to p. 236, "Researching Sources and Topics" and read to p. 238. STOP at "Conducting the Interview." READ p. 240 box titled "Interview traps to avoid." Last, read p. 247.
- Bender, Chapter 10 (NOTE: You'll use this sourcing format when you write your Hunger Week article).
- Read: <http://www.poynter.org/2016/7-tips-for-conducting-better-interviews-with-scientists/413311/>

10/19 **DEADLINE:** Farmers Market article due by 5 p.m. (email to cfletch@luc.edu)

10/24 **GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCHING AND REFINING YOUR ARTICLE/PODCAST IDEA WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

10/26 Receive grade at midterm by email

WEEK EIGHT: FOCUS: REACTIVE AND PROACTIVE REPORTING. COVERING A SPEECH OR EVENT. WRITING/PRODUCING OPINION PIECES.

10/30 **Before class, read:**

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 15. SKIP p. 311-312, "The internet brings pornography to children." (This chapter will help you cover your Hunger Week Event)
- ✓ Wyss, Chapter 11.

10/31: STUDY GUIDELINES FOR UNIT TEST TWO ON 11/8 WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS

11/1 Lab. Covering a speech or meeting

11/2 **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING HUNGER WEEK ARTICLE WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

11/2 DEADLINE TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASS WITH GRADE OF "W"

WEEK NINE FOCUS: REPORTING ON ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS. IDENTIFY PITFALLS. GOALS: REPORTING ETHICALLY. REACTIVE VS. PROACTIVE REPORTING.

11/5 **Before class, read about the first on-the-scene reporting of an environmental disaster:**

- http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/pompeii_portents_01.shtml
- <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~afutrell/404b/web%20rdgs/pliny%20on%20vesuvius.htm>

AND READ ABOUT ETHICAL ISSUES OF CONTEMPORARY REPORTING:

- Bender, Chapter 5, "Privacy," p. 89-92. SKIP "Appropriation." RESUME reading with "Newsgathering Issues, p. 93-96.
- Bender, Chapter 6, "Reporting Grief," p. 112-117 (Stop at "Deciding When to Name Names").
- Bender, Chapter 14, "Ethics of Visual Journalism," p. 288-291 (Stop at "The Digital News Package").

In class: Talk about moving your article/Podcast idea forward for pitch presentation and letter at end of semester.

11/5 GUIDELINES FOR WRITING UP YOUR HUNGER WEEK EVENT PAPER WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOU'LL ALSO RECEIVE YOUR "TEACH-OUT" LAB ASSIGNMENT FOR 11/15 and 11/20 WITH GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACH-OUT ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS.

11/7 Before class, read the following tips on disaster reporting:

- <http://dartcenter.org/resources/covering-recovery-context-background-challenges-preparing-major-disasters>
- <http://dartcenter.org/content/arun-karki-reporting-without-home>
- <http://www.poynter.org/2015/breaking-news-best-practices-reaching-and-interviewing-witnesses-and-victims-of-trauma/376312/>
- <http://dartcenter.org/content/disaster-coverage-as-it-applies-to-digital-world>

In class: Talk about Teach-Outs on SEJ projects (due on 11/15) and pitch presentations for 11/29.

WEEK TEN: HUNGER WEEK LAB AND UNIT TEST TWO

11/6-11/12 HUNGER WEEK (material for Article Two, due 11/16. You must cover one session.)

11/6 TBA. Hunger Week.

11/8 UNIT TEST TWO

WEEK ELEVEN LONG-FORM ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM. EXPOSITORY AND INVESTIGATIVE.

11/13: Before class, read:

- Wyss, Chapter 10
- <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/07/20/the-really-big-one>
- <https://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/how-to-stay-safe-when-the-big-one-comes><https://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/how-to-stay-safe-when-the-big-one-comes>
- Wyss, Chapter 2, p. 26-29.
- Bender, Chapter 19. SKIP p. 405
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/31/climate/the-city-of-my-birth-in-india-is-becoming-a-climate-casualty-it-didnt-have-to-be.html>

11/14 **FORMAT TO USE FOR PITCH LETTER, WITH EXAMPLES OF PITCH LETTERS (DUE 11/30) WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI GUIDELINES**

11/15 Lab. TEACH-OUTS RE SOCIETY OF ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISTS' AWARD-WINNING PROJECTS.

11/16 **DEADLINE.** HUNGER WEEK ARTICLE DUE BY 5 P.M. TO CFLETCH@LUC.EDU.

WEEK TWELVE: LONG FORM ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM (CONT.) OPTIONAL REWRITES DUE. THANKSGIVING

11/20 **DEADLINE: REWRITES OF LABS (IF YOU HAVE TOO MANY TO RE-DO ON 12/4) AND ARTICLE ONE DUE. BRING IN PRINT- OUTS OF ORIGINALS STAPLED TO NEW HARD COPY.**

In class: Talk about pitch presentations (oral) for next week. Your presentation will earn you points on your pitch letter (due 12/4).
Finish Teach-outs of SEJ projects.

11/22 THANKSGIVING/NO CLASS

WEEK FOURTEEN: PRESENTATIONS START

11/27: No reading. Pitch presentations in class. NOTE: Take notes on each. Questions will be on Unit Test Three.

11/28 STUDY GUIDELINES FOR UNIT TEST THREE (12/6) WILL BE POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS.

11/29 PITCH PRESENTATIONS (cont.)

11/30 DEADLINE for PITCH LETTERS by 5 p.m. (EMAIL) NOTE: FOLLOW FORMAT POSTED ON SAKAI ANNOUNCEMENTS 11/14.

LAST WEEK OF CLASS:

12/4 DEADLINE FOR HUNGER WEEK ARTICLE REWRITE (NEW MATERIAL. HARD COPY).

IN CLASS: OPTIONAL – RE-TAKE OF GRAMMAR QUIZ. RE-WRITES OF LABS.

12/6 LAST DAY OF CLASS. UNIT TEST THREE.

NOTE: THIS CLASS DOES NOT HAVE A FINAL EXAM.