

Syllabus

Reporting and Writing (writing intensive)

CMUN 205, Section 01W

MWF 11:30-12:20 p.m.

IC 112

Dr. Fletcher (cfletch@luc.edu)

NOTE: YOU CAN FIND THIS SYLLABUS POSTED UNDER
ANNOUNCEMENT IN SAKAI AFTER CLASS

Course Goals: This course takes a critical approach ("critical" meaning both enhancing your appreciation of what it takes to gather and report the news and increasing your awareness of the news media's failures and difficulties) to contemporary media reporting and writing. You will learn about reporting and writing for different platforms (print, broadcast, and internet). An important emphasis throughout will be ethical issues in news gathering and reporting. This course will introduce you to the basic elements of media reporting and writing, with emphasis on developing news judgment, finding and verifying information, learning effective interviewing skills, meeting deadlines, and learning how to write clearly and concisely.

Required Text:

Reporting for the Media, 10th edition. Bender, et al. Students must have THIS edition.

Class Format:

This course fills a requirement for the Journalism minor and major. It is also a "writing intensive" course.

This class meets three times a week. The first two classes of each week usually will consist of lecture and discussion. The third class will either be lab, meaning a documentary segment or, more often, a practical application of journalistic skills. Note: Because of the time crunch of 50-minute classes, some of your lab work may start on Wednesdays.

GROUND RULES:

Absences: Attendance counts. Lab cannot be made up. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting the notes from another student. Authorized absences for travel (e.g., travel for a club or team) must be cleared with me in advance. Documentation must be provided.

Plan carefully: If you miss a lab or a quiz, you cannot make it up (unless for pre-authorized travel or if you have a documented illness or authorized absence). If you miss a guest speaker, you get a zero for that lab.

Laptop/iPhone Use: Laptops and other digital devices cannot be used to take notes during lectures, unless you have an authorized reason for doing so. Using one without such permission will count as a late (see “Policy on lateness,” below).

Class Participation:

In class, questions and comments are welcome. Inappropriate classroom behavior (rudeness to others: being disruptive, distracting, or disrespectful) can lower your final grade by as much as 30 points, at the discretion of the professor. 100 points will be taken off for extremely disruptive or inappropriate behavior. Positive class participation (consistent, constructive participation) can raise your grade by 30 points. You cannot receive an A in this class if you never contribute.

Policy on lateness:

Come to class on time. Coming in late (more than five minutes) disrupts the class. Everyone is entitled to **one** late arrival. However, unless there is a verified reason (shuttle breakdown), I expect you to be here on time. **You lose ten points for every late arrival, or for classroom “presentism,” as in:**

- ✓ Leaving during class (unless it is for a medical reason. You must bring in a note from Student Services documenting this by the second week)
- ✓ Looking at your computer/cell phone during class
- ✓ Doing other work during class
- ✓ Willful napping.

THESE BEHAVIORS ALSO MERIT TEN POINTS OFF PER INFRACTION:

- ✓ No eating is allowed in class. (unless it is for a documented medical reason)
- ✓ Make sure your cell phones are off (**not** on vibrate) before class begins.
- ✓ No laptops out for note-taking, unless you have a documented reason for needing to use one.
- ✓ NOTE: We'll use laptops for our written labs, or you can use the computers in the IC.

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

- ✓ **Plagiarism** of any form and of any length on assignments will be reported to the Dean of Students immediately and the student will receive a grade of "F" for the course. According to Loyola University guidelines(SOC website):

“ 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 submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, audio, video,etc.”

- ✓ **Fabrication** of a whole assignment, or any part of an assignment, will result in an “F” for this course.
- ✓ **Cheating** on an exam or quiz will result in an "F" for this course.

GRADING

You will receive a numerical grade on all work for this class. There will be 1,000 points possible for this course.

The following point totals guarantee grades:*

921-1000 = A
 900 -920 = A-
 880-899 = B+
 821-879 = B
 800-820 = B-
 780-799 = C+
 721-779 = C
 700-720 = C-
 680-699 = D+
 621-679 = D
 600-620 = D-
 Below 600 = F

***At the end of the semester, these grade ranges may be adjusted downward, according to a curve, at instructor's discretion**

Assignments:

- ✓ **Midterm exam (100 points)**
- ✓ **Grammar/punctuation quiz will be worth 50 points**
- ✓ **Final exam (200 points) AP Style quiz will be worth 50 points of the final.**
- ✓ **Three outside papers (500 points; first paper worth 100; second paper worth 200; third paper worth 200 points**
- ✓ **Platform for the last paper will count for 30 points for either the second or third paper**
- ✓ **Lab work (writing in class on deadline): 100 points**
- ✓ **Pop quizzes on readings/lectures : 50**

BREAKDOWN OF OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENTS:

You will write three outside papers:

- ✓ A report on one session of one of your classes this semester (600-750 words)
- ✓ A story on the lecture and tour given by the IES Bio-diesel Manager (1000-1200 words)
- ✓ A “behind the scenes” story **or** profile feature story (1000-1200 words)

See paragraph below re platform component worth 30 pts of your second or third paper)

NOTE: One of the requirements of this class is that you do a “platform” version of one of these assignments. You can use your camera or iPhone or digital voice recorder, or borrow equipment from Digital Media Services in the IC.or the SOC. Like a working journalist, you will get video and audio and edit it to accompany your written story. A PowerPoint is not acceptable.

It’s important that you get started early on whichever story you choose! For whichever paper you do, the “all platform” version will be due and presented in class on the last two class periods.. See below for how written assignments and platform assignment will be graded (See “*Grading*”).

GRADING CRITERIA WORKSHEET (COURSE GRADE)

Minimum criteria to receive a passing grade (D+ for majors, D for non-majors):

- **regular, on-time attendance**
- **completion of all original (i.e., non-plagiarized) papers and assignments, handed in on time and of college-level quality**
- **passing grade on final exam (more than a D)**

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT:

You have to satisfy the above criteria to pass the course. **If you have not handed in one of your three outside papers, you will fail the class.**

SAFETY NOTE: MAKE SURE TO SAVE ALL LAB WORK AND YOUR OUTSIDE ASSIGNMENTS. IF YOU EMAIL WORK TO YOURSELF, MAKE SURE YOU SAVE IT IN A FOLDER. LOST WORK IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS:

POINTS WILL BE TAKEN OFF FOR THE FOLLOWING (for outside and in-class papers; grammar rules apply after 2/20):

- a) **Incorrect formatting, as in where put headings, missing slug line.**
- b) **Five points for any time essential information is left out, like "when" or "where."**
- c) **Five points for formatting paper wrong**
- d) **Two points for each time attribution is missing.**
- e) **Two points for each of these grammatical errors: using commas, semicolons, or apostrophes incorrectly; using incorrect agreement; using sentence fragments; having dangling or misplaced modifiers.**
- f) **Spelling errors (see below, "Spelling")**

Spelling: For outside assignments, 10 points will be taken off for each error. For in-class (lab) assignments, 5 points will be taken off. You will be graded down for misusing "it's" and "its," as well as "a lot," "affect and effect," and other common misspellings. Do not trust Spell check. Accuracy is crucial in journalism, and spelling is a big part of it.

Factual error: The grade of "F" is automatically given to papers containing any factual error: for example, misspelling your source's or subject's name or giving wrong information (for example, identifying Fr. Garanzini as the Dean of Students , or Evanston as a western suburb). Live by this rule: When in doubt, check it out! A paper with a factual error cannot be re-written. **Note:** If you misspell either the first or the last name of a subject,

even one time, the paper receives a grade of F. So, if you write, Dean Dan Heider, this would count as a factual error.

Late papers: Journalism is about meeting deadlines. A late paper, whether lab or outside paper, will lose 50 points for each day the paper is late.

LAB DEADLINES: At the end of most labs, you will email me your work; the deadline is 12:20 p.m. If you miss your deadline, even by a minute, you receive an “F” for that assignment.

Journalism is about meeting deadlines; it is better to send something that may need a few more sentences or some editing instead of not submitting your article at all.

Office Hours:

MWF I’m available right after class until 1 p.m. and after 2:30.

I have an unofficial office at LSC in the IC, either in or just outside the café. You can meet me there before or after class. After 2:30, I’m in the faculty lounge in the Mundlein Café.

Email me ahead of time to make sure I’m not in a meeting when you stop by.

If these times don’t fit your schedule, feel free to set up an appointment by e-mailing me at cfletch@luc.edu.

Throughout the semester, feel free to email me any time with questions about your work.

IMPORTANT DATES:

2/17 ARTICLE ONE DUE

2/20 GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION QUIZ

2/23 MIDTERM EXAM, PART ONE

2/25 MIDTERM EXAM, PART TWO

3/31 ARTICLE TWO DUE

4/22 PLATFORM PRESENTATIONS

4/24 ARTICLE THREE DUE

4/27 FINAL EXAM

CLASS SCHEDULE

Changes in the schedule may be made, depending on the progress we make through the material and the availability of our guests, who may need to switch their dates with us.

Written assignments are due on the date indicated. If you fail to turn in an outside paper by the deadline, unless you have a documented excuse, your grade is F for the course.

Articles may be added to your readings.

Note: Readings are to be completed by the date indicated Friday will be lab; at times, we'll start lab on Wednesday.

A brief quiz may be given at the start of class whenever there is a reading. If you come in after the quiz, you cannot make it up.

Pop quizzes may also be given on the lectures at any point during the semester.

1/12 Introduction.

Go through syllabus and assignments.

1/14 FOCUS: CONTEMPORARY JOURNALISM ACROSS PLATFORMS AND WHAT IS NEWS?

Read the following before class.

- ✓ Bender. Preface (xi-xii. Stop at “New Features”)
- ✓ Bender, Chapter One
- ✓ Bender, Chapter Five

In class:

- ✓ View NYT front page.
- ✓ View *Guardian* ad.

1/16 Finish lecture material Lab, observation training.

1/19 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY/NO CLASS

1/21 **FOCUS OF WEEK: OBSERVATION AND EVENT COVERAGE**

Before class, read:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter Fifteen
- ✓ Bender, Chapter 11.
- ✓ NOTE: These chapters are especially important for covering your event (a class lecture) and for using quotes and attribution in your first article, due 2/17

In class: Discuss observation, note taking, event coverage and covering class lecture (including using attribution and quotes) for first outside paper.

1/23 Lab. Before lab, review Bender, p. 10-11 on formatting papers. Pay special attention to where to put name, date, and slug line. **Five points off for incorrect formatting**

1/26 **FOCUS OF WEEK: CLEAR WRITING, PART ONE**

Before class, read:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter 2, pp.28-36 (from “Basic Sentence Structure” on)
- ✓ Bender, Appendix B, pp. 572-573

NOTE: If you feel your grammar is especially shaky (trust me, you are not alone!), I'm happy to work with you outside of class to clear up your grammar questions

NOTE: Your Grammar/Punctuation/ Quiz will cover the above material PLUS the handout on common mistakes you receive in class today.

1/28 Bender, Chapter Three

1/29 Receive platform analysis assignments by email. You'll be assigned a partner to choose a platform to show in class.

1/30 Lab.

2/2 FOCUS: CLEAR WRITING, PART TWO

Before class:

✓ Bender, Chapter Four

In class: More on how to cover class lecture for ARTICLE ONE, due 2/17

2/4 FOCUS: NEWS STORY ORGANIZATION

- ✓ Read Bender: Chapter 10 to p. 251. Skip "Narrative Style." Resume with "Using Transitions," p. 253. Read through p. 260.
- ✓ Read http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/06/sports/on-el-capitans-dawn-wall-climbers-downtime-is-surprisingly-routine.html?_r=0 (example of soft news)

In class: Distinguish between hard and soft news. Talk re story organization.

2/6 Lab.

2/9 FOCUS: HARD NEWS AND SOFT NEWS LEADS.

Before class:

- ✓ Read Bender, Chapters Eight and Nine.
- ✓ Read Bender, Chapter 11.

In class: Questions re Article One.

2/11 Review for Grammar/Punctuation Quiz on 2/20

2/12 LOOK FOR:

- ✓ Midterm review for exam on 2/25 and 2/27 will be posted under “Announcements” on Sakai.
- ✓ Guidelines for writing ARTICLE ONE

2/13 Lab. Meet with partner to select platform for presentation to class .

2/16 FOCUS: ETHICS IN JOURNALISM

Before class: Read Bender, Chapter Seven (through p. 174)

2/17 ARTICLE ONE DUE, CLASS COVERAGE (600-750 words) by email to cfletch@luc.edu by 5 p.m.

2/18 ETHICS (cont) Documentary, if time (if not, will be shown after midterm)

2/20 GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION QUIZ (This is part of the midterm and counts as 50 pts of the exam).

2/23 MIDTERM, PART ONE

2/25 MIDTERM, PART TWO

2/27 FOCUS: Interviewing Skills

Before class:

- ✓ Read Bender, Chapter Twelve
- In class: Discuss ARTICLE TWO, you choice of** profile OR “behind the scenes” story due 3/30

3/2-3/6 SPRING BREAK NO CLASS THIS WEEK

3/9 FOCUS: DIGITAL MEDIA, THE STORY PACKAGE

Before class, read:

- ✓ Bender, Chapter Fourteen (Skip pp. 360-364, from “Blogging and Digital Media” through “Microblogging”). Resume with “Digital News Package” . 364 through p. 369.

NOTE: An editor for the *Racine Journal-Times* in Wisconsin will give you instructions on how to do platforms to accompany your writing. You will each do a platform for either Article Two or Article Three.

3/11 INTERVIEWING SKILLS (CONT)

Before class: Read http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/21/magazine/the-unbreakable-laura-hillenbrand.html?_r=0

3/13 Lab. Platform presentations,.

3/16 FOCUS: BROADCAST REPORTING AND WRITING AND

Before class: Chapter Thirteen, pp. 331-338 (stop at “Guidelines for Copy Preparation”)

In class: Preview AP Style rules for Wed quiz

3/17 Guidelines for writing Paper Two (due 3/30) will be posted on Sakai under Announcements.

3/18 Before class: Start of AP Style Rules. Go to “Resources” in Sakai. Study Addresses, Abbreviations and Capitalization. NOTE: Do not study “Broadcast” rules for any AP Style entries.

Quiz will be on these rules.

3/20 Lab. Broadcast ledes.

3/23 FOCUS: WRITING SPECIALIZED STORIES AND OBITUARIES.

Before class:

- ✓ Read Bender, Chapter 16,

- ✓ Study Numerals, Time,, and Titles in AP Style Rules under Resources in Sakai. **Do not study the “Broadcast” rules here.**

In class: Quiz on Chapter 16 and AP entries

NOTE: Today is the deadline for withdrawing with a “W,” rather than a WF. If you have a D at midterm, you should consider withdrawing.

3/25

In class: Reporting how to’s for Paper Three – Event on 4/8 and 4/10

3/27 Lab.

3/30 FOCUS: LIBEL

Before class:

- ✓ **Read Bender, Chapter 6 (Stop at “Privacy,” p. 137**
- ✓ **Study Punctuation and Preferred Spellings in AP Style (Resources in Sakai)**
- ✓ **Emergency questions re Paper Two**

3/31 PAPER TWO DUE: INTERVIEW OR BEHIND THE SCENES
Email to me by 5 p.m.

4/1 Libel lecture (cont)

4/3-4/6 EASTER VACATION

4/8 PAPER THREE EVENT COVERAGE: VISIT FROM ZACH WAICKMAN, LU’S BIODIESEL LAB MANAGER

4/10 PAPER THREE EVENT COVERAGE (cont.) TOUR OF LU’S IES BUILDING AND BIODIESEL LAB

4/13 FOCUS: PRIVACY AND NEWSGATHERING ISSUES
Before class: Read Bender, Chapter 6, 137-end of chapter

4/14 TEMPLATE FOR STUDY FOR FINAL WILL BE POSTED UNDER ANNOUNCEMENTS ON SAKAI

4/15 FOCUS: Advanced Reporting

Before class: Read Chapter 19

In class: Talk re Chapter 19 and LIBEL AND PRIVACY, CONT.

4/16 Guidelines for writing Sustainability Paper will be posted on Sakai

4/17 NO READING.

DAVID TREERING, DIRECTOR OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS AT LU WILL VISIT CLASS TO TALK ABOUT COMPUTER TOOLS JOURNALISTS CAN USE IN REPORTING. Take notes: This material will be on the final.

4/20 Visit from Dr. Molly Walsh (whose PhD is in statistics), Math Dept, LU, who will lecture on stats for journalists.

4/22 PLATFORM PRESENTATIONS BEGIN

**4/24 SUSTAINBILITY PAPER DUE, HARD COPY
ONLY HARD COPIES WILL BE ACCEPTED
FINISH PLATFORM PRESENTATIONS**

4/27 FINAL EXAM 1-3 p.m.