

Loyola University Chicago
Spring 2018
COMM 205 – Reporting Basics I: Writing and Interviewing
MWF 11:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Room 003, School of Communication

- **Instructor:** Astrid Greve Spencer
- **E-mail:** agrevespencer@luc.edu
 - Please allow up to 24 hours for a response to e-mail on weekdays; limited responses on weekends.
 - Remember to include your name and the course on your subject line.
 - Please use your Loyola account when sending e-mails.
- **Phone (cell):** 419.206.1690
- **Office hours:** Fridays, 12:30 – 1 p.m., and by appointment; Lewis Tower, 9th Floor

Texts and Course Materials

- “Inside Reporting,” Third Edition, by Tim Harrower
- The Associated Press Stylebook, 2017
- Webster’s Dictionary (recommended)

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. This is a writing-intensive course. 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.

Grading

Students will be expected to know material covered in lectures and the textbooks, and this will be measured through writing assignments and exercises.

- **Grading Criteria:**
 - **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.

- **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

- **Total possible points for the semester: 1,000**
 - (80) In-class exercises, quizzes
 - Quizzes begin promptly at the start of class; 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, among others.
 - (140) Brief summaries of readings from “Inside Reporting,” various homework
 - (100) Man/Woman on the Street story
 - (100) Partner profile
 - (100) Event story
 - (100) Opinion piece
 - (100) Broadcast news stories
 - (200) Final project

- **Rewrites:** If you receive a grade of 73 or less, you may rewrite the following assignments: Man on the Street story; event story; broadcast news story. 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.

Professionalism

Students are expected to act in a professional way as if this were a job. Attend class regularly, arrive on time, be prepared for class, pay attention during lectures, and participate in discussions. Frequent absences and tardiness will result in a lower grade. If you’re expecting to be absent or late, please call or email me **before** class.

You also are expected to keep abreast of the news. Read local, regional and national newspapers (Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Daily Herald, New York Times, USA Today); listen to news radio (WBEZ, WBBM); watch local, national and international news. Our classroom discussions will often touch on the news of the moment, and there will be current events quizzes.

Deadlines

Deadlines are important in journalism, and you will be required to file assignments on time. 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.

Writing

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. It is important that you learn proper newspaper style, so refer often to your Associated Press Stylebook. You will also be graded on journalistic practices, which will be detailed in the text, handouts and in-class discussions.

Format: Please submit hard copies of assignments and homework in Times New Roman, 12 point, double-spaced in paragraph form with name, date, name of assignment and word count in the top right corner. A lot of the assignments will also need to be turned in via Sakai or email.

Writing Help: For additional help, please visit the writing center: <http://www.luc.edu/writing/home/> if needed. Be aware that journalism is a distinctive type of writing, so some of your issues may not be addressed by the writing center, which can help you with basic English and sentence construction.

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>

TurnItIn: Some assignments will be subject to review by the Turnitin service. Any story that is flagged by this service will require immediate attention.

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: <https://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>.

Schedule (Note: subject to change)

Week	Days	Topics	Details
1	Jan. 17, 19	Course Overview; Introductions; Journalism Basics: What Is News? What Does A Journalist Do? What Is The Structure Of A News Story?	<p>Homework: Read IR chapters 1, 2 and 3. Prepare a summary of the readings. Give me the thing you found most interesting from the readings, succinctly. This doesn't have to read like a news story. Word Count: 75. Due: Jan. 22. Points: 20.</p> <p>In-class exercise: Why is this story newsworthy?</p>
2	Jan. 22, 24, 26	Using The Associated Press Stylebook; Working With Leads	<p>Due: Summary of chapters 1-3</p> <p>Homework: Read AP Style A-D</p> <p>In-class exercise: AP writing practice and writing ledes. Points: 20.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT I</p> <p>Assignment: <u>Five leads:</u> Using the examples highlighted on pages 46-47, write five 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. Due: Jan. 29. Points: 80</p>
3	Jan. 29, 31; Feb. 2	The First 5 'Grafts': Going Into Detail About The Structure Of A News Story; Interviews: How To; Picking And Writing Proper Quotes And Attribution	<p>Due: Five Leads</p> <p>Homework 1: Read IR chapter 4 and AP Style E-M.</p> <p>Homework 2: Clip three stories from the Chicago Tribune or Chicago Sun-Times, and rewrite the first three grafts of each using the facts in the story. Due: Jan. 31. Points: 30.</p> <p>In-Class Exercise: Write a news story from an interview, based on the lessons about interviewing, writing quotes, sources and attribution. Use a transcription provided to you. Points: 20</p>
4	Feb. 5, 7, 9	Covering Tragedies: Accident/Disaster Stories	<p>Homework: Read IR chapter 5. Prepare a summary of the reading. Word Count: 75. Due: Feb. 7. Points: 20.</p> <p>Assignment:</p>

			<p>Man on the Street story. Details TBD. Word count: 250-300. Due: Feb. 12. Points: 100.</p> <p>In-Class Exercise: Writing an accident story. Points: 20.</p>
5	<p>Feb. 12, 14*, 16</p> <p><i>*Ash Wednesday: Classes meet</i></p>	<p>Meeting, Speeches And Events: Dissect A Speech/ Meeting Story;</p> <p>Feature Reporting: Dissecting A Profile Structure</p>	<p>Due: MOS story</p> <p>Homework: Read IR chapter 6 and AP Style N-Z</p> <p>In-Class Exercises: *Asking the right questions; Writing a meeting story *Dissecting a profile story. What makes a person newsworthy? Points: 20.</p> <p>Assignment: <u>Event/Speech/Meeting story:</u> Cover a real-world event, speech or meeting. Hand in with your story proof of the event. This can be a flyer, a print-out of the event online or from an email. The news story MUST include quotes from the speaker(s) and two other sources, most likely audience members. Get well-rounded, diverse quotes from subjects. Word count: 300-350. Due: Feb. 26. Points: 100</p>
6	<p>Feb. 19, 21, 23</p>	<p>Feature Reporting: Dissecting A Profile Structure (cont.);</p> <p>Law & Ethics: Legal Issues In Journalism & FOIA; Ethical Decision-Making; Libel</p>	<p>Homework: Read IR chapter 7 and AP Style libel. Prepare a summary. Word count: 75. Due: Feb. 21. Points: 20.</p> <p>Watch: https://youtu.be/TppG2Wcl3bY (Why journalists have an obligation to challenge power)</p> <p>Assignment: <u>Partner Profile:</u> 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. Word count: 350-400. Due Dates: Draft – Feb. 23; Final March 2. Points: Draft 40; Final 60 (Total 100)</p>
7	<p>Feb. 26, 28; March 2</p>	<p>Continue Legal Discussions</p>	<p>Due: Event/Speech/Meeting story</p> <p>In-Class Exercise: AP libel rules, legal rights & restrictions for journalists. Points: 20.</p>

8	March 5, 7, 9	Spring Break: No Classes	
9	March 12, 14, 16	Writing Editorials, Columns And Reviews; Opinion	<p>Read: http://www.digitaethics.org/essays/journalistic-objectivity-fiction-and-thats-just-fine</p> <p>In-Class Exercise: Dissect an opinion piece; find facts to support an opinion or review</p> <p>Due: Opinion Draft</p> <p>Assignment: <u>Opinion piece:</u> Topic TBD. This column has a required draft, which 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. Word count: 400-450. 100 points. Due Dates: Draft – March 16; Final – March 21. Points: Draft 40; Final 60 (Total 100)</p>
10	March 19, 21, 23	Broadcast Journalism	<p>Due: Opinion Final</p> <p>Homework: Read IR chapter 9.</p> <p>In-Class Exercise: The Anatomy Of A Broadcast Story News Story. Write a broadcast script based on a news event. Points: 20.</p> <p>Assignment: <u>Broadcast stories:</u> Topic TBD. Craft various broadcast stories based on a given set of information. Word count: n/a. Due: March 26. Points: 100.</p>
11	March 26, 28 March 30: Good Friday, No Classes	Digital Journalism - Writing For The Web And Alternative Story Forms	<p>Homework: Read IR chapter 8 and AP Style social media. Prepare a summary. Word count: 75. Due: March 28. Points: 20.</p> <p>Due: Broadcast stories</p> <p>In-Class Exercise: Surf The Web; Craft ALT Ideas (bring your laptop to class)</p>
12	April 2: Easter Holiday, No Classes	Digital Journalism (cont.); Final Project	<p>In-Class Exercise: Social media reporting</p> <p>Assignment: <u>Final Project:</u> Feature on a topic TBD.</p>

	April 4, 6		<p>Elements: 500-600 word story; minimum of three quoted or paraphrased interview sources; an ALT (graphic or sidebar) – this can include a photo package of at least three images or a video produced by the student.</p> <p>Due Dates: <i>April 9:</i> <u>Package plan/budget line</u> (50 points) – 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. <i>April 16:</i> <u>Draft</u> (50 points): All of the reporting should be completed at this stage. At least half of the story should be written. You might be asked to share your progress with the entire class. <i>April 23:</i> <u>Final Project</u> (100 points)</p>
13	April 9, 11, 13	Follow-Up Stories; Public Relations	<p>Homework: Read IR chapter 10; locate a news story based on a press release</p> <p>Due: Final project package plan/ budget line(s)</p> <p>In-Class Exercises: Writing a story with updates; Write a story from a press release. Points: 20.</p>
14	April 16, 18, 20	Public Relations (cont.); Photos And Captions	<p>Due: Final Project, Draft</p> <p>ASSESSMENT II</p>
15	April 23, 25, 27	Final Project Work; Final Exam Review	<p>Due: Complete Final Project; Prepare to deliver a brief 3-4 minute oral report on your work, including your findings and what you went through to get the story.</p>
16	April 30 – M	Final Exam, 1 – 3 p.m.	