

Loyola University Chicago
COMM 259-201 News Editing
Spring 2018
SOC 003; MWF 1:40-2:30 p.m.

Instructor: Randy Minkoff

E-mail: rminkoff@luc.edu (. Remember to include your name and the course on your subject line. Please use your Loyola e-mail account when sending e-mails.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to show you in great detail how to edit copy for all types of journalistic situations from blogging to broadcast to print. This includes proper language skills in a world of social media as well as a thorough knowledge of style, grammar, spelling, punctuation, fact-checking, design, Web packaging, headline and caption writing, and editorial planning.

The course will make you a better editor and writer as you learn how to produce crisp, tightly written stories as well as improving communication skills that may be used in securing employment. It will make you more aware of current reporting trends, interpretation of news events and distinguishing different styles of stories by various traditional and new (social) media, and the challenge of exercising good news judgment. It is also an important skill for current and future employment, where accuracy and professionalism are essential.

It is extremely important that you are aware of current news stories and trends. This course places a heavy emphasis on current events and how they are reported and transmitted to the public. You should use a variety of news sources – daily newspaper, weekly magazines, websites, blogs, radio and television news, to learn how each handles stories and provides details of news events. These will be a point of discussion in all classes. Class discussion is an integral part of the class as many editing situations are subjective.

REQUIRED TEXT

The Associated Press Stylebook, preferably most recent

GRADING

For most assignments you will receive a letter grade: A(excellent), B(very good), C(average), D(poor),m F(automatic for any incomplete assignments). Your grades are based upon demonstrating a good grasp of the concepts and techniques, progress and improvement in writing style, written quizzes, and attendance and in-class participation. In some isolated cases you will receive a ‘complete’ for an assignment; I will be very clear up front about grade expectations for each project. You may and are encouraged to ask about progress you are making during the term either in person or via e-mail. There will also be a final exam which will be more heavily weighted. All projects are due at the assigned deadline time: papers turned in after deadline will be graded down accordingly. Class attendance is essential; participation in discussion of assignments and issues will be a key part of your overall grade. You must notify me immediately if there is an issue with attendance or assignment. (see next page)

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. We will start on time; lateness is highly discouraged.
2. Classroom discussion and participation will be an integral part of the course and your overall grade. All topics that are reviewed, and how to handle them, will be included on tests and papers.
3. All assignments are due on the day they are listed.
4. If you expect to be absent, notification **MUST** be emailed immediately. It will be up to you to check with a classmate to get the assignment and all information discussed in class.
5. Quizzes will be administered promptly at the start of class.
6. If you miss a quiz, you may not make it up, with the exception of an excused absence.
7. Don't ever hesitate to ask me for clarification or direction.
8. **ALWAYS** be honest with me and with your work. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (Subject to change because of the nature of current events and issues that may come up during the semester)

Week 1: Course introduction; News judgment (Jan. 19-21)

Exercises on how to notice even the smallest details. Emphasis will be given on the differences in traditional media and today's media that often includes use of social media and so-called new media (blogs, YouTube, etc). How stories are given their place on a front page of the paper, website or newscast. Decisions about what information to use or hold back in a story.

Week 2: Answering the questions (Jan. 22-26),

Emphasis will be placed on the AP stylebook, proper grammar and tight writing.

Week 3: Story structure (Jan. 29-Feb. 2)

The evolution of the lead paragraph; differences in style between conservative wire service writing and more colorful magazine approach. How the web has changed editing style and approach to stories.

Week 4: CASE STUDY: Rolling Stone Magazine and the UVA rape allegations. (Feb. 5-9th)

How a breakdown in the editorial change led to sweeping changes at Rolling Stone Magazine and how the investigation into an alleged assault became national news. The impact on today's revelations of sexual harassment in the work place and in Hollywood and lessons to be learned from such a controversial case.

Week 5: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. (Feb. 12-16th). How to deal with quoting, reporting and dealing with social media in a world of Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Corrections, mistakes, how to approach them in the wake of instant journalism and a shrinking number of editors in reviewing stories.

Week 6: Plagiarism and theft of quotes, information. (Feb. 19th-23rd)

Screening of “Shattered Glass” and how other similar influences have shaped the culture of background checks, news editing, etc.

Week 7: Headlines, Captions and Images (Feb. 27-March 1st)

Headline writing practice; images and captions: best practices

The role of the sound bite on today’s journalism and its impact on other news sites.

PLEASE NOTE: MIDTERM WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1ST

WE WILL NOT HAVE CLASS ON FRIDAY, MARCH 3RD _

Spring Break March 6-11TH, no classes

Week 8 Sports/feature editing (March 12-17th)

The differences in the approach to non-breaking stories; the latitude sport and feature writers have in their copy and the differences and challenges of their deadlines.

Week 9 Business journalism (March 19-24th).

The rise of business reporting, specialty publications, websites and broadcast programs. Challenges of knowing the audience, tailoring copy to fit the demographics of the reader.

Week 10: Instant reporting; breaking stories and news conferences. (March 26-28th)

The challenge of editing instantly, taking dictation and editing, the need to sacrifice time for speed in getting out breaking news. We will spend one day in the SOC 100 Broadcast studio.

NO CLASS ON GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 30TH AND MONDAY, APRIL 2ND)

Week 11: The evolution of communications in American history: From editorials and editorial cartoons to today. (Wed April 4-6th)

A history of the impact that opinion pieces and art have had on history; censorship and how to deal with controversial editorials & cartoons.

Week 12: The future of news and how it will be handled by reporters/editors (April 11-16th).

Will editors still be relevant in the future or will the readership not care about style, tight editing or checking of facts? Will social media replace traditional media as the only source of information?

Week 13: JEOPARDY (April 18-23rd)

In preparation for the final exam, the class will compete in Editorial Jeopardy, played along the same format as the television show. Categories will be issues and items we have discussed during the term and teams will study ahead of time to be prepared to win the game.

Week 14: April 26th—In class conferences

April 28th: part I of final exam

April 30th—Part II of final exam

—Final paper will be due Finals week