

Loyola University Chicago
COMM 205
Basic Reporting
Spring 2020
Monday-Wednesday-Friday 2:45 – 3:35

RogersEdgeReporter Newsroom: 6443 Sheridan Road

Professor John Carpenter
Jcarpenter2@loyola.edu
312-909-2254

Office hours: My office is in our classroom, and I am there every day from 2 to 6. I am also available to meet by agreement.

Course Description:

This class will teach essential journalism skills, including news writing, feature writing, interviewing, research, finding stories, editing and rewriting, journalism ethics, and professional journalistic practices. While the course will feature lectures and class discussion, the emphasis will be on practical experience, covering real people and real events in the neighborhood around Loyola. Worthy student work will be published at www.rogersedgereporter.com, a community news website created just for this and other Loyola classes.

While this is a journalism class, it is important to remember that the essential skills of a good journalist – resourcefulness, relentlessness, clear and careful writing, high ethical standards, and good judgment – are skills that translate into many fields.

Your professor:

I'm a veteran journalist, and have worked as a reporter for both the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun-Times. My work has also appeared in the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, Forbes, and many other publications. I was editor of the Chicago Sun-Times' award-winning Homicide Watch website, which I also helped launch. Over the course of my career I have covered everything from crime to politics to transportation to education to travel to tech startups to music to sports.

Course Text

There is NO TEXTBOOK for this course. Special readings will be assigned. I will share my lessons on Sakai, which will mostly be in the form of Power Point presentations. These, and your notes and recollection, should be all you need to prepare for tests.

NOTE: You will be expected to regularly read a major news publication (Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, your home-town newspaper.) Part of your participation grade will be participation in our "Keeping up with the news" exercise most Fridays. Select students will briefly summarize and critique a recent (within the last five days) news story.

Grade scale:

100-93 = **A**
92-90 = **A-**
89-87 = **B+**
86-83 = **B**
82-80 = **B-**
79-77 = **C+**
76-73 = **C**
72-70 = **C-**
69-67 = **D+**
66-63 = **D**
62 or below = **F**

Expectations, Classroom Conduct and Etiquette

NO OPEN LAPTOPS during class, unless we are working on a project, or you are researching something germane to class.

Because participation and discussion are crucial components to the class, anything that distracts you from being fully engaged is a detriment to both the class as a whole and to your ability to get the most out of the class material. Therefore, to help you stay focused on the subject matter at hand and to enhance your participation grade, please:

- If you must look at your cell phone, stand up, excuse yourself and step out of the classroom.
- Do not use a laptop or tablet computer during class, unless it is for in-class work, or you provide proof that you have a documented need to use one to take notes. (See disabilities section below. Note: PowerPoints presented in class will be available on Sakai.)

Student Rules and Responsibilities Academic Dishonesty

Loyola University and the School of Communication expect academic integrity and have policies regarding academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (such as failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing sources.

It is dishonest to:

- Turn in the same work for two classes;—Turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or copy from another student or use a “cheat sheet” during an exam.

Turning in work that is not your own will result in failure on the assignment and possible dismissal from the class.

You can find Loyola's policies regarding academic integrity at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml

.

Special Needs

If you have a special circumstance that may impact your course work and for which you may require accommodation, please contact me early in the semester so arrangements can be made with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). We will accommodate your needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. Loyola's policy is that it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SSWD

website: <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>.

◆

Electronic Communication & Information

Sakai:

Course information and assignments will be available on Sakai. Please notify me if you have any problems using the class Sakai site.

Email: I will answer email within 24 hours on weekdays but will not always access it on weekends. You may not receive a response to a late Friday email until Monday.

Text: For urgent messages, feel free to text me at 312-909-2254. Please identify yourself in the text.

Assignments:

News Story (150 points) (DUE: MARCH 13)

Complete a 300-400-word story on an actual news event, or a newsworthy person. We will discuss this in greater detail, and I will distribute subject parameters. *Your grade will drop one full letter for each day your assignment is late, unless an extension is agreed upon before the deadline.*

QUIZZES: (100 points total) We will have three short quizzes to ensure that you are staying on top of class presentations, and any special readings assigned.

Test (150 points) FEB. 19

Will cover basic journalism definitions and reporting guidelines; basic writing rules and guidelines. It will include a general news writing portion. We will review in greater detail before this test.

Final story (300 points) (DUE: April 20, by the end of the day)

Report and write a 600-word story on any subject that is newsworthy in the neighborhood we are covering. I will consider allowing students to pair into teams to write longer stories. We will talk about this more in great

detail. *Your grade will drop one full letter for each day your assignment is late, unless an extension is agreed upon before the deadline.*

Class Participation: 100 points

I expect you to be attentive in class, to contribute to class discussions, to give your best effort in in-class exercise, to be supportive in in-class feedback on exercises, and to be supportive of your fellow students. Please note the prohibition on open laptops for anything other than in-class work.

"Keeping up with the news": Select students will briefly summarize and critique a recent (within the last five days) news story. You must choose one story that attracts your attention, either as a good piece of writing or reporting. You will bring that sample to class, where you will be expected to briefly talk about it, explaining why you liked it or didn't like it.

Final Exam (200 points) May 1, 4:15 p.m. OR on the last day of class (up to you)

The emphasis on the final exam will be writing. There will be a brief multiple choice section. But most of the test will be short responses to writing prompts, which will allow you to demonstrate the writing rules and techniques you have learned.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Typically Monday and Wednesday classes will follow a traditional format of lecture and class discussion. Friday will include more writing exercise, as well as random discussion of "Keeping up with the news"

NOTE: This schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced.

Jan.	13	Introductions/Syllabus review
	15	Introduction to journalism
	17	Writing exercises
	20	NO CLASS
	22	News-writing basics
	24	Keeping up with the news introduction
	27	News-writing basics
	29	News-writing basics
	31	QUIZ
		Keeping up with the news/writing exercises
Feb.	3	News-reporting basics
	5	News-reporting basics
	7	Keeping up with the news/reporting exercises
	10	News-reporting basics
	12	News-reporting basics
	14	Keeping up with the news/writing exercises
	17	Test review
	19	Test #1 (News writing and reporting)
	21	Keeping up with the news/writing exercises
	24	Finding the news
	26	Finding the news

28 Keeping up with the news/exercises
 Mar. 2 OFF: SPRING BREAK
 Mar. 4 OFF: SPRING BREAK
 6 OFF: SPRING BREAK
 9 Interviewing
 11 Interviewing
 13 **NEWS STORY DUE**
 Keeping up with the news
QUIZ
 16 Feature writing
 18 Feature writing
 20 Keeping up with the news/Feature writing exercise
 23 Story structure review
 25 Story structure review
 27 **QUIZ**
 Keeping up with the news/quote structure exercise
 30 Broadcast writing basics
 April 1 Broadcast writing basics
 3 Keeping up with the news/broadcast writing exercise
 6 Final story guide
 8 Final story discussion meetings
 10 OFF: GOOD FRIDAY
 13 OFF: EASTER BREAK
 15 Final story discussion meetings
 17 TBD
 20 **FINAL STORY DUE**
 22 Final Exam review
 24 **FINAL EXAM** (Student option: You can take it on the last day of
 classes, or on the scheduled final exam date. Up to you.)

May 1 4:15 p.m. : Scheduled final exam