

Reporting Basics I: Writing and Interviewing

COMM 205-20W (2372)

SPRING 2020

Tuesdays/Thursdays 10-11:15 a.m.

CORBOY LAW CENTER Room 710

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. There will be many writing assignments and style/grammar quizzes. We'll also have quizzes on the news of the day, so reading/watching/listening to credible news sources on a daily basis is strongly encouraged. Highly recommend a daily newspaper or newspaper website to get a feel for the rhythm and flow of how stories are put together. There also are free copies of newspapers to browse in the lobby of the School of Communication, and your enrollment at Loyola gets you a free subscription to the New York Times.

Instructor contact information:

Eric Krol

312-222-3385 (work)

312-699-0627 (cell)

Email: ekroll1@luc.edu (yes, they added an extra "1," to it...it's a typo)

Office hours: By appointment or we can talk before/after class.

Required texts and materials:

*“Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism,” third edition. By Tim Harrower. This is the textbook for the class. You can buy the online version (assuming that exists) or get a hard copy. Either one is fine. But we'll be using the third edition, which is the most recent one (as far as I know).

*Associated Press Stylebook. (Online version recommended over the hard copy version. You'll be using it to look up concepts/words, and I've found that students tend to like the online version better. It's more intuitive to use (there's a search box). Believe it's \$26 for a year's access. The link: <https://store.stylebooks.com/apstylebookonline.html>

*Read local and national newspapers to keep up with current events (online reading is OK). I think you already get free NYT online subscriptions with your enrollment at Loyola or maybe it's just the School of Communication? Also a good idea to read the Loyola weekly student newspaper (The Phoenix). Not only will this help you in class (weekly extra credit current events quizzes), but you'll be a better-informed citizen and sound smart/be a sterling conversationalist at parties.

Grading: You will take quizzes on your basic knowledge of AP Style — the spelling, grammar and punctuation used in newsrooms.

You are expected to apply this style to your writing assignments. More on those later.

You will produce a 100-word analysis of the readings in Harrower. Please write a thoughtful reaction to the readings. What surprised you? What did you find relevant to your own life? Let's not just do an elementary summary that simply skims the highlights of the material.

You also are expected to keep abreast of the news. Read the Chicago Tribune and/or Chicago Sun-Times for local news and the New York Times or Washington Post for national news. Our classroom discussions will often touch on the news of the moment, and there will be current events quizzes for extra credit.

Students are expected to act in a professional way as if this were a job. That means attending class regularly, arriving on time, being prepared for class and participating in lectures.

Surfing the web or checking your email and Instagram won't get you very far in this class. If you expect to be absent or late, please call or email me — just like you would your editor.

I'll post the grades in SAKAI for each assignment as we go along.

Grading criteria for written work:

A: Publishable work with no spelling, grammatical, punctuation or AP Style errors. The work must be well organized and display the “five Ws” of news writing. Multiple sources and proper attribution are important. Did you understand what the news was?

B: Minimal spelling, grammatical, punctuation and AP Style errors; minimal missing information and source information; and minimal problems with the ‘lede’ (the first paragraph) and organization.

C: Notable number of the above errors.

D: Significant problems with the story.

F: Misspelled proper names; other major spelling, grammatical, punctuation and AP Style errors; an almost total lack of information and sources; and severe problems with the lede and organization.

Some examples of point deductions (subject to change)

*Typo -1

*Spelling error -2

*Attribution error, including use of quote marks -2

*Punctuation error -2

*Spelling a proper name wrong -5

*Fact error -5 to -10

*Missed what the news was -10

*Organizational issues -5

Total possible points for the semester: 1,000

- * (50) In-class AP style and grammar quizzes
- * (20) In-class profile exercise
- * (30) Writing leads exercise
- * (100) Brief summaries of readings from “Inside Reporting” (Max of 20 points per summary x five summaries)
- * (100) Campus or city event story
- * (100) Man/Woman on the Street story
- * (50) Opinion/Review piece
- * (100) Politics story
- * (100) Profile story
- * (100) Police story
- * (200) Final exam: Deadline writing
- * (50) Attendance/participation: You lose five points for each class you miss, plain and simple. You’ll also lose points if you’re chronically late, distracted by your phone or not paying attention/participating. If you miss more than 10 classes, I will start deducting five points each time from the total points you’ve earned in class. If you provide a doctor’s note that has some specifics, I will consider restoring five points deducted for an absence. For extended absences due to illness or personal issues, let’s talk.

Format: For the brief summaries of “Inside Reporting” chapters, you can turn in a printed copy at class. For the writing assignments, please **email** me Word documents in Times New Roman (that’s the font used in this syllabus), 12-point, in paragraph form with name, date, name of assignment and word count in the top right corner AND bring a hard copy to class.

Deadlines: 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.

Rewrites: If a student receives a grade of 73 or less, she or he may rewrite the following assignments: Event story, Man/Woman on the Street story, as well as police, politics, profile stories. You will have one week to submit the rewrite. (Not the final exam or the opinion/review piece.) The average of the two scores — the original and the rewrite — will be used to calculate the final grade for the assignment.

Extra credit: You can earn up to 30 points in extra credit. We’ll do current events quizzes most weeks, usually on Thursdays. There are likely to be three questions a week for 10 weeks throughout the semester. No make-ups.

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

Class meeting schedule:

(Subject to change, and I'll tell you about any changes via email. I'll also usually do a "What's Ahead This Week in COMM205 email on Sunday or Monday.)

WEEK 1

Jan. 14: Intro to class and each other/go over the various parts of a newspaper/newspaper web site.

Jan. 16: Read Ch. 1 and 2 and we'll discuss them. Pick-your-own front page in-class exercise.

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WEEK 2

Jan. 21: Intro to the AP stylebook.

--- Abbreviations/Acronyms Review/Quiz 1

Jan. 23: Intro to AP stylebook continues.

--- Capitalization Review/Quiz 2

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WEEK 3

Jan. 28: The 5Ws and the H discussion/Writing the Inverted Pyramid style. With in-class exercise.

--- What's Due: *Ch. 3 summary*.

Jan. 30: How to write leads/identify what the news is, with in-class exercise.

--- Lead-writing exercise assigned.

--- Current Events Quiz #1 for extra credit.

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WEEK 4

Feb. 4: How to do interviews, possible in-class exercise.

--- What's Due: *Lead-writing exercise.*

Feb. 6: How to do attribution/use quotes/set up quotes, with in-class examples.

--- Man/Woman on the Street story assigned. (*Due date: Feb. 20*)

--- AP Stylebook Numerals/Quiz 3.

--- Current Events Quiz #2 for extra credit.

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WEEK 5

Feb. 11: How to write opinion pieces/reviews.

--- What's Due: *Ch. 4 summary.*

--- Punctuation Review/Quiz 4.

Feb. 13: How to write restaurant or concert reviews.

--- Opinion/review piece assigned. (*Due date: Feb. 27*)

--- Current Events Quiz #3 for extra credit.

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WEEK 6

Feb. 18: In-class work on Man/Woman On the Street story. Time to ask me questions as you prepare to turn it in.

Feb. 20: How to self-edit. (With in-class exercise, showing how to check for spelling/AP style, whether the sentences make sense, etc.) 12 painless steps.

---AP Style Review/Quiz Grammar 5. Subject/verb agreement.

-- Current Events Quiz #4 for extra credit.

--- What's Due: *Man/Woman on the Street* story.

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WEEK 7

Feb. 25: Fake news, politics and journalism (with in-class exercise)

Feb. 27: Libel lecture Ch. 7 in-class exercise (pull it or print it)

--- What's Due: *Ch. 7 summary*.

--- What's Due: *Opinion/review piece*.

--- Current Events Quiz #5 for extra credit.

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WEEK 8 (no class)

March 3: SPRING BREAK

March 5: SPRING BREAK

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WEEK 9

March 10: How to write event story with examples. How to cover speeches/meetings.

--- What's Due: *Ch. 5 Summary.*

March 12: Event story assigned/how to find events (*Due date: March 26*)

--- Current Events Quiz #6 for extra credit.

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WEEK 10

March 17: How to write a profile lecture

--- Profile assigned. (*Due date: April 2 via email*)

--- What's Due: *Ch. 6 summary.*

March 19: In-class exercise writing a profile of fellow student. Worth 20 points. No makeups.

--- Current Events Quiz #7 for extra credit.

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WEEK 11

March 24: Covering other types of stories. Overview discussion on Ch. 6 (Beyond Breaking News) w/in-class exercise or discussion. What's a feature story/they're found in every section.

March 26: Work on profile story in class. Time to ask questions, review your approach, etc.

--- What's due: *Event story.*

--- Subject-Verb Agreement Instruction/Quiz 5.

--- Current Events Quiz #8 for extra credit.

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WEEK 12 (no class)

March 31: instructor off

April 2: instructor off. What's due: Profile story. Emailed to instructor at ekroll1@luc.edu

WEEK 13

April 7: How to cover politics/writing about government/budgets/percentage increases/etc.

April 9: Mock press conference for politics story/politics story assigned. (*Due date: April 14*)

--- Current Events Quiz #9 for extra credit.

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WEEK 14

April 14: How to cover crime/mayhem lecture.

--- How to write for the web.

--- Assign police story. (*Due date: April 21*)

April 16: Investigative reporting, how-to, tips, etc.

--- What's due: *Politics story*.

--- Current Events Quiz #10 for extra credit.

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WEEK 15

April 21: Practice deadline writing/in-class exercise.

---What's due: *Police story*.

April 23: Final exam prep/go over in-class exercise.

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WEEK 16

April 28: Final exam 1-3 p.m.

DEADLINE WRITING web brief and final story. 200 points.

School of Communication Academic dishonesty policy

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. These examples of academic dishonesty apply to both individual and group assignments.

Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. 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;
- Taking an examination by proxy. Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy.
- 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.
- Submitting the same work for credit in two or more classes, even if the classes are taken in 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.

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

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 Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication. Instructors must provide the appropriate information and documentation when they suspect an instance of academic misconduct has occurred. The instructor must also notify the student of their findings and sanction.

The Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml .

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

Students with Disabilities: Students who need special accommodations for exams or class meetings because of a learning disability will provide you with a letter documenting the type of accommodations needed. If they claim to have a physical or psychological condition that hinders their ability to perform in class, medical documentation must be provided to the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) and that office will assess whether or not your collaboration is required. These matters are confidential. Special note:

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

Managing Life Crises and Finding Support

Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf – just email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: LUC.edu/dos or LUC.edu/csaa.

The phone number is: 773-508-8840. The email is deanofstudents@luc.edu

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