

COMM 205-21W
Reporting Basics I: Writing & Interviewing
Loyola University Chicago
Spring 2020
Online Only

Instructor: Katie Drews

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(Please allow up to 24 hours for a response & longer on weekends)

Office Hours: Email me to schedule a video conference

Bio: <https://www.luc.edu/soc/adjunctfacultydirectory/katiedrews.shtml>

Course Description

This class teaches the fundamentals of journalism with a strong emphasis on developing skills in news reporting, interviewing and writing. Students will learn how to develop news judgment and understand basic journalistic ethics, as well as other professional journalistic practices, including how to find story ideas, research thoroughly and write clearly, accurately and objectively. This will be accomplished through online lectures and discussion forums, assigned readings, fieldwork, writing assignments, exercises and quizzes. Please note, this is a writing intensive course.

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

Required Materials

Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism (Third Edition) by Tim Harrower
Associated Press Stylebook (*Either the book or [an online subscription](#)*)

Assignments & Projects

Weekly assignments will be designed to help you practice and develop the skills and techniques covered in the lectures and readings. Larger projects will then allow you to demonstrate those skills that you have learned. In addition, running throughout the semester we will also have:

AP Style quizzes

You must adhere to AP Style for all writing assignments in this course to ensure your copy is clean and consistent. To help you learn and memorize the style guidelines, we will have a short AP Style quiz each week. It will be open book, so you can reference the style guide during the quiz. Quizzes cannot be made up if you miss a due date.

Reading logs

You should be reading local and national publications daily to stay current with the news. This includes your own campus paper, the [Loyola Phoenix](#). The Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Tribune and NY Times [are all available for free](#) through the university library. You will need to keep a reading log listing the headline, author and publication for at least five news articles that you have read each week. This will count toward your participation grade.

Inside Reporting analysis

You will produce a 200-word analysis of the readings from our textbook. Please write a thoughtful reaction to the readings. What surprised you? What did you find relevant to your own life and your own reporting experiences? Let's not just do an elementary summary that simply skims the highlights of the material.

Final Project

There will be a final project in lieu of a final exam, which will give you the opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired throughout the semester. Final projects will be due on the day and time of our scheduled final.

Grading

Grades will be weighted according to the following scale:

Assignments/quizzes: 25%

News article: 20%

Feature article: 20%

Final project: 25%

Participation: 10%

Assignments will be graded on a point system. At the end of the semester, the accumulated points will be converted into a letter grade based on the following scale: A 94-100%; A- 90-93%; B+ 87-89%; B 84-86%; B- 80-83%; C+ 77-79%; C 74-76%; C- 70-73%; D+ 67-69%; D 64-66%; D- 60-63%; F 0-59%

Grading criteria

Each assignment will have specific instructions. In general, grades will be determined considering the following criteria:

--Were instructions followed?

--Is your content clear and concise?

--Is your lead compelling?

--Are your quotes lively and informative?

--Is it organized in a thoughtful and logical way?

--Is it thoroughly researched with multiple sources?

--Is it factually accurate? If you have any major factual errors, your grade will automatically be dropped by one letter grade.

--Is proper grammar, punctuation and spelling used? All content should be in AP Style.

Story Subjects

For objectivity and in keeping with standard professional practice, avoid doing stories using your own family members, significant others, close friends or roommates as subjects. The best rule of thumb is: Don't build stories around people you are related to or are particularly close to. Likewise, avoid doing stories about groups you belong to. Such stories will receive a grade reduction, unless: 1) it is a unique circumstance, 2) the story is about your connection to the story subject, and 3) the connection is revealed in the story. Please contact me in advance if you have a story idea that would justify first-person involvement, but these should be the exception and not the rule.

Furthermore, you should avoid using material from another journalist or news organization in your work. All work for this class must be original and produced during and for this course.

Rewrites

If you receive a grade of C- or below on a story assignment, you have one week to rewrite the story for an improved grade. Your final grade for the assignment will be the average of the two scores.

Deadlines

Meeting deadlines is a critical part of being a journalist. So is managing multiple assignments at one time. Always be mindful of upcoming deadlines and manage your time accordingly. Remember to allow ample time for getting a hold of sources. Late assignments will drop one letter grade each day they are filed past deadline. If there are truly extenuating circumstances, you must discuss it with me before your deadline.

Participation

You will be expected to display a proper level of professionalism throughout all of our online classroom activities. Robust and lively debate is encouraged, but please remember to be kind, courteous and respectful to all of your classmates while participating in discussion forums.

School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity

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.

Accommodations

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 me. If you require assignment accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with the Student Accessibility Center (<https://www.luc.edu/sac/>). I will accommodate your needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is your responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet your own needs and assignment due dates.

Schedule *(Subject to change)*

Major deadlines are outlined below. You will additionally have weekly assignments, exercises and discussion forums based on the material covered during the lectures and readings. You will also be expected to complete work out in the field in order to finish your story assignments. In addition to any assigned homework for the week, you should be regularly working on your upcoming projects. For details about your upcoming assignments and projects, please refer to Sakai.

Week One - *January 15*

Course overview and expectations; What is news?

HOMEWORK: Read IR chapters 1 & 2

Week Two - *January 22*

Developing story ideas

HOMEWORK: Read IR pages 67-81

Week Three - *January 29*

Finding sources; Interviewing

Story pitches (for news article) due

HOMEWORK: Read IR pages 36-51

Week Four - *February 5*

Writing leads; Inverted pyramid

HOMEWORK: Read IR pages 52-66

Week Five - *February 12*

Editing; Fact-checking

HOMEWORK: Read IR pages 82-92

Week Six - *February 19*

Editorializing; Attribution

Story pitches (for feature article) due

HOMEWORK: Read IR Chapter 5

Week Seven - February 26

Beat reporting

News article due

HOMEWORK: Read IR Chapter 6

SPRING BREAK (No class March 2-6)

Week Eight - March 11

Feature Writing

HOMEWORK: Read IR pages 140-149

Week Nine - March 18

Media Law

HOMEWORK: Read IR pages 150-156

Week Ten - March 25

Journalism Ethics

Story pitches (for final project) due

HOMEWORK: Read IR Chapter 8

Week Eleven - April 1

Digital Journalism

Feature article due

HOMEWORK: Read IR Chapter 9

Week Twelve - April 8

Broadcast Journalism

HOMEWORK: Read IR Chapter 10

Week Thirteen - April 15

Public Relations

HOMEWORK: No readings

Week Fourteen - April 22

Wrap-up final projects

Final Examination

Final project due