

JOUR 202

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & BROADCASTING WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

FALL 2008

JOURNALISM 202: INTRODUCTION TO NEWSWRITING AND REPORTING

Mass Media Technology Hall

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Office Hours: T., Th. 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. and most Fridays by appointment

Note: School of Journalism & Broadcasting meetings and off-campus appointments preempt office hours

TO GET A RESPONSE: You must state your business in the subject line, identify yourself by name, course, section number and meeting time at the beginning of the phone or e-mail message, and provide me with a call back number. Repeat it twice slowly .)

COURSE GOALS

This course provides a foundation for all journalism-related majors in gathering information and writing it accurately, logically and dynamically. This hands-on approach will combine a variety of writing and editing exercises, reading assignments, and class discussions that include First Amendment issues, current events, ethics, libel and invasion of privacy. Out-of-class reporting must include a diverse population of interview subjects. There will be an opportunity for student engagement.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Writing and Reporting News, Carole Rich

The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual Norm Goldstein, ed. I

REQUIRED READING

The College Heights Herald (Published Tuesdays and Thursdays) as well as other student media

Daily media, including online resources

University email must be checked at least twice daily. This is how I correspond with the class.

POLICIES OF THE SCHOOL AND THE UNIVERSITY

CORE VALUES AND COMPETENCIES

The School of Journalism & Broadcasting Assessment Plan was revised in April 2003, to incorporate the 11 values and competencies that all graduates of programs accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications are supposed to possess upon graduation. Irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies. Please read the attached list of core values and competencies. In this class, you will be expected to: Be aware and apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practice; #4. Be aware of concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information; #5. Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity; #6. Think critically, creatively and independently; #8. Write correctly and clearly in forms and style appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve; #9. Critically evaluate your own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness; and #10. Be aware of how to apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Any student with a disability, who needs an accommodation or other assistance in this course, is required to: 0. Get special documentation for me to sign through the OFFICE OF STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES, (DUC A200. 745-55004) and make an appointment with me immediately.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARRASSMENT

The objective of the Western Kentucky University educational program is to develop individuals who use enlightened judgment in their professional, personal and social lives. To achieve this goal, the university's policy forbids discrimination against individuals or groups based on race, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. Please refrain from using racist or sexist language in the classroom or in your projects, unless, it is deemed necessary within the context of a story assignment.

PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, DOUBLE-DIPPING

Integrity is the lifeblood of our profession. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on the exam, paper or project; or by failure in the course. Plagiarism is the appropriation, either word for word or in substance, of the writings or works of another and offering the ideas as one's own. Also prohibited and punishable is a practice called "double-dipping" (using the same paper, with minor changes, in two or more courses). Instructors often talk with each other about assignments and may discover unreported duplication. If you wish to use the same topic for two courses, discuss it with both professors in advance and describe the overlaps and differences for them. Copies of plagiarized work are placed in the student's academic file with a note from the professor in whose class the offense occurred.

THE SYSTEM AND THE RULES

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is required; there will be an automatic reduction of one letter grade for each two classes missed.

I take attendance at the beginning of every class period. Students who are more than 10 minutes late to class, who are persistently tardy (more than two times), or who leave early, will be marked absent. Be aware that after I get to know who you are, you may not realize that I'm taking attendance

ILLNESS:

I will accept only a copy of a prescription or the prescription bottle in event of illness. I do not accept doctor's excuses; they are too easy to duplicate. You must notify me immediately via e-mail if you are ill.

DEATH:

Students who lose family members will produce a copy of the biography of the deceased on the official mortuary form that includes all of the mortuary contact information for verification. . You must notify me immediately via email if you will be away for a funeral.

GRADING

Graded assignments will receive a letter grade of A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), and F (59 or below). Missed assignments will receive a zero. Those who repeat their mistakes, or who make new ones in the course of rewrites will have additional points taken off per infraction.

PUBLICATION:

Up to 5 points will be awarded for publication, but you must provide me with copies of the publication or DVD.

ADDITIONAL GRADES:

These points are determined during the calculation of final grades.

0. Professional attitude, 11 points. This includes coming to class prepared with assignments and the necessary books and materials, and respect, interest and level of cooperation in all aspects of the course. Whining, complaining and arguing (except in the spirit of intellectual debate) erode these points.

0. Meaningful participation, 11 points. (See below)

0. Following directions: 4 points.

STYLE AND GRAMMAR QUIZZES AND EXAMS

There will be a series of AP style and grammar quizzes of up to 20 points each.

There may be occasional spot reading quizzes. These cannot be made up for any reason.

There will be at least one test of 100 points based upon reading assignments, lectures and class discussions during the regular semester. The final exam will be comprehensive.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: REQUIRED COPY SET-UP, TYPEFACE AND POINT SIZE

All writing assignments must be typed in 9-point Palatino using 1.5-line spacing. The upper left hand corner of the first page must be single spaced with the following information: last name first, then first name on first line; Date on second line; "slug" on third line. The slug is a one-two word description of the content of the story.

HOMEWORK, IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS and GRADES

There will be a variety of out-of-class assignments of increasing difficulty that will be discussed in class, followed by rewrites or similar assignments that will be completed in class, on deadline, and submitted for grades. These will be valued at between 25 and 200 points, depending upon the time in which they occur in the

semester, the length, and level of difficulty.

DEADLINES

Deadlines are required to be met.

EVALUATION OF WRITING AND REPORTING:

Assignments will be evaluated on a professional basis, which includes quality of the lead, completeness, structure and organization, writing style, accuracy, spelling, grammar and adherence to AP Style rules.

MISSPELLED NAMES AND ERRORS IN FACT WILL RESULT IN A REDUCTION OF ONE LETTER GRADE.

CLASS DISCUSSION

Meaningful participation in class discussion is required. "Meaningful" participation is defined as thoughtful, thought-provoking participation that engenders further discussion. Each student has a perspective that will help the class to define issues and to broaden understanding. Note: It is obvious when a student persists in asking questions to pull the class off point, and does not constitute meaningful participation.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is the standard of this class. All assignments must meet professionally accepted standards of good taste and decency.

LAB FEES:

The use of lab computers is for in-class assignments only. Your lab fees are used to help pay for printer ink and paper for the stories you write and rewrite

UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

You will only see your professors once, twice or three times a week.

You might think that our only job is to come to class. This is an inaccurate perception. Many of us, who teach writing, grade constantly. We are also required to serve on committees as the chair and as members, to do academic advising, advise student groups and publications, attend professional meetings, participate in some meaningful way in a community locally, regionally, nationally and/or internationally and write, edit and publish.

Please keep this in mind when you become impatient with professors who may miss an e-mail message or phone call or be slow to reply, or who don't turn grading around quickly. If all we had to do were come to class to teach our dear students, it would be a perfect world.

I typically teach 62-75 writing and editing students, typically read and grade about 1,500 stories and exams a semester, typically review some 100 video tapes a semester, arrange field trips for student engagement, meet with some 30 individual academic advisees, advise a student group, arrange and officiate, each semester, at a student ceremony and reception, and chair one of the nine committees on which I serve. I am also involved with professional research, writing and editing projects.