

English 514

Journalism 2010

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Welcome to Journalism. This is a fast-paced course designed to help you hone your reporting, writing and editing skills through regular story assignments ranging from hard news and features to reviews and opinion pieces. You will learn how to conduct interviews, ask tough questions, and write stories from your notes on deadline. You can also expect to become critical consumers of the mass media. We will discuss libel and the law, the ethical issues facing modern-day journalists, and how the rise of Web journalism and blogging are changing the role of the traditional news media.

Texts: ~Kovach and Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism*
 ~Carole Rich, *Writing and Reporting News*
 ~A major daily newspaper, either in hard copy or online: *The New York Times*,
The Wall Street Journal, *The Washington Post* and *The Boston Globe*—or your
 hometown daily—are all acceptable. I recommend setting one as your homepage.

Attendance: You are expected to attend every class and to arrive on time. Any unexcused absences will be counted as a cut. If you are absent, get the homework assignment from a classmate. The syllabus will also be posted on Blackboard.

Expectations: You are required to follow the news every day. Always know what is going on in the world. Homework assignments must be typed, dated, and handed in at the start of the next class period. No email copies will be accepted. Late assignments will be penalized one-third of a grade for each day they are late. When interviewing sources for stories, students must reveal that they're working for a class and that their articles MAY be published in the student newspaper. All reading assignments are mandatory, and must be completed before the class period for which they are assigned.

Structure of class: We meet Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, with an extended period on Thursdays. Unless otherwise notified, we will meet every Thursday in the PACC, where we can use the Internet, edit together on screen and practice writing stories on deadline. In addition to regular reading and writing assignments, each student will complete one major feature story SUITABLE FOR PUBLICATION by the end of the term. We will work on getting these pieces published in the campus or local press. Students will also each pick one magazine or blog to follow closely throughout the term, occasionally reporting back to the class on its coverage and ultimately writing a critique. We will also have several guest speakers, on dates to be determined, and watch a number of films.

Assessment: Your grade will be based on the following factors:

~The quality of reporting, writing and judgment in the final drafts of assigned articles turned in by deadline.

~Contributions to class discussions and demonstrated understanding of the reading.

~The quality of homework assignments.

~Contribution to group projects.

Academic Integrity: Everything you write for this class is expected to be strictly your work and yours alone. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

This syllabus is subject to change with fair warning.

Week #1 Sept 14-17: What is News?

- T Introductions and expectations
HW: ~Read Chapter 1 of “The Elements of Journalism”
~Read Chapter 1 of “Writing and Reporting News”
~Write a paragraph on a recent news story—national, international, or local—that you followed closely. Discuss why it mattered to you, how you followed it, and what you thought of the coverage.
- Th Meet in PACC. Mock press conference: Writing hard news on deadline.
HW: ~Read Chapter 2 in “Writing and Reporting News”
~Decide which mag/blog you want to cover and figure out what its target audience/purpose is. ***Please list on our class discussion board so no two people pick the same one.
- F Writing ledes, news vs. features. Discuss blog/mag choices.
HW: ~In Rich book, exercise on pp. 42-43: use notes to write story two different ways: as a news story and as a feature, no more than 250 words each.
~Read Rich Chapter 3 on story ideas.

Week #2 Sept 20-25: Finding the story.

- T Generating story ideas.
HW: ~Come in with three ideas for topics you’d like to write your final feature on.
~Find an example of a good story from your mag/blog and prepare to present it to the class in the PACC on Thursday.
- Th Features: Analyzing what makes a good story.
HW: ~Zero in on your story idea and think about feasible ways to pursue it.
- F Using quotes and attribution
HW: ~Read Rich Chapter 5 on interviewing
~Think of a well-known person you’d like to interview and come to class with three questions you’d ask.

Week #3 Sept 27-Oct 1: Interviewing/Profiles

- T Interviewing.
HW: ~Read Susan Orleans profile “The American Man, Age 10” posted on Blackboard.
~Read Rich Chapter 22 on Profiles and Obituaries
- Th Profiles. Pair up with classmate and interview/Conferences on feature story topics.
HW: 500-word profile of classmate due next Tuesday.
- F: Writing Workshop
HW: ~Work on profile

Week #4 Oct 4-8:

T Profiles due.

Th Movie Day: "Frost/Nixon"

HW: ~Revise profiles

F Finish Movie.

HW: ~Read Chapters 2 and 4 in "The Elements of Journalism"

More detailed syllabus to follow:

Week #5 Oct 11-15: Accuracy and the Law

Week #6 Oct 18-22: Ethics/Journalists Who Made News

Week #7 Oct 25-30: Writing Opinion

Week #8 Nov 1-4: Reviews

Week #9 Nov 8-12: Blogging and the Internet

T No class—Wellness Week

Week #10 Nov 15-19: Editing/Writing Display Copy

Rough draft of final feature story due

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week #11 Nov 30-Dec 3: Obituaries

Critique of chosen publication/website due

Week #12 Dec 6-10: Assessment Period/Special Schedule

Final feature due

WINTER BREAK BEGINS DECEMBER 10