WR201 Writing for Media (eCampus)

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Online hours: M-F 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. I generally reply to emails within 48 hours on weekdays, so if you have questions that are time-sensitive, email me at least 48 hours before you need a reply. Emails sent on the weekend will typically be opened during normal business hours on Monday.

Course Description
Introduction to print and digital news reporting, with focus on basic communications methodologies and practices. Prerequisite: Grade B or higher in WR121 (a Bacc-Core Skills requirement).

Required Texts
The Associated Press Stylebook & Briefing On Media Law. ISBN: 9780465021871. This book is necessary to complete the style quizzes on Canvas; indeed, it is impossible to pass them without it. Any year of the Stylebook will work for this course. The Beaver Bookstore has an ample supply of new Stylebooks, or you can purchase a used copy from Amazon. Either way, you need to get one in time to pass your first style quiz. Get this accomplished post haste.

Course Overview
In recent years, journalism has been transformed by information technology, corporate media systems, and new social media. This class introduces journalistic techniques and concepts that will enable you to participate in writing for newspapers, magazine, blogs, and other popular media forms. Although these various styles sometimes use different storytelling techniques, they all value the writer’s ability to generate tight, accurate, exciting stories at a moment’s notice. Students begin WR201 by learning to write hard news, summary leads, and headlines using the inverted pyramid style. After gaining command of this basic writer’s toolbox, students progress to writing their own feature stories and in-depth profile articles, which are placed in a blog gallery for sharing and discussion. Students will also study basic media theory concerning ethics, First Amendment law and the fight for objectivity in the worlds of corporate and citizen journalism.

Time Commitment
Remember that online classes are not easier than in-person classes. Online classes often require more initiative and dedication on your part to get the most out of them. The online format also requires students to do considerably more writing per week than in a face-to-face class – since all of our class discussions take place in writing. For a 3-credit course, you should plan to spend a minimum of 9 hours per week reading assigned material, watching clips, participating in class activities and, of course, writing. ‘A’ students often spend more time than this.

Course Learning Outcomes
By the conclusion of this course, you will be able to:
  o Create both hard and soft news copy for online/print media.
    • Demonstrated by writing hard news, features and profiles in a variety of styles.
  o Use standard journalistic skills to organize and execute clear, accurate writing on deadline.
    • Demonstrated by completing short writing exercises on deadline.
    • Demonstrated by generating copy in the inverted pyramid style using summary ledes, deks and kickers.
  o Use editorial skills to groom stylistically perfect copy
    • Demonstrated by use of AP Style manual in peer reviews and writing assignments.
  o Identify and implement the basics of print mechanics, graphics and story structure.
    • Demonstrated by successfully identifying sidebars, maps, fact boxes, pull quotes, deks and infographics in newspapers — and developing your own.
  o Develop critical thinking skills relevant to media-related fields.
Demonstrated by analyzing and explaining course concepts in subject-specific class forums and writing assignments.

- Demonstrated by connecting course concepts to contemporary news coverage.
  - Recognize the impact of new media technologies and corporate media on journalistic style, delivery and content.
  - Demonstrated by creating discussion board posts and blog entries.
  - Navigate the basic laws and ethics guiding the practice of writing for the media
  - Demonstrated by completing writing exercises, hard news assignments, and participation in class forums.
  - Demonstrated by implementing anti-plagiarism guidelines in all coursework.

**Course Components: (100 points total)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board &amp; Blog Posts</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercises (leads, quotes, headlines, pyramid)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style Quizzes (three of them, 5 points each)</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feature Story **</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profile Story **</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Maximum Total Score**: 100 points for the course.

A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 88-89; B 83-87; B- 80-82; C+ 78-79; C 73-77; C- 70-72; D 60-69

RECALL: Grades in college are not like grades in high school—the requirements for high scores are often far more stringent. Consider that a 'C' means you have met the basic requirements of the course (C = average). To receive a 'B' (good) you must go above and beyond the basic course requirements, and do “well” on all assignments. To receive an ‘A’ (excellent), you must produce excellent work at all times; by that rationale, your articles and exercises must be vastly superior to your cohort group. What this means in terms of your writing: all copy must be rigorously edited for grammar and punctuation errors, your stories must be interesting, innovative and well-researched, your facts must be accurate, and you must hit every one of your deadlines on time. Anything less will be reflected in your grades.

**Expectations for Timely Discussion Forum Submissions:**
Please be advised that the rest of your classmates rely on these posts to complete their coursework. Because of this, late submissions for discussion board and blog assignments will receive no credit, and failure to complete more than two of these assignments will result in five points deducted from your cumulative score for this class, as well as negatively impacting your class participation score.

**Expectations for Student Conduct/Academic Honesty**
Because meeting deadlines is vital in journalism, late work will not be accepted. Technical problems (such as internet connectivity) will not be accepted as excuses for late work. Do your work in a timely fashion so that if you have technical problems, you have time to address those and still submit your work on time.

We will follow the ethical principles outlined in the OSU policy on academic honesty. It is your responsibility to know and follow this policy. A summary of this policy is located at http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm.

☐ Academic dishonesty is defined as an intentional act of deception in one of the following means:
☐ Cheating (use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids)
☐ Fabrication (falsification or invention of any information)
Assisting (helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty)
Tampering (altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents)
Plagiarism (representing words or ideas of another person as one’s own, intentionally or unintentionally)

Any form of academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, will lead to an “F” grade in this course. In order to avoid plagiarism, do your work in a timely fashion, so you are not tempted to use unethical “cut and paste” techniques. If you’re uncertain about what is and isn’t plagiarism, take this quiz, which is recommended by OSU’s library: http://www.bio.ucalgary.ca/undergrad/plagiarismquiz.html.

Disability Notice
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Students with accommodations approved through SSD are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who have not yet obtained SSD approval regarding a disability should contact SSD immediately at (541) 737-4098.

Communicating with Me
If you have any questions about the syllabus or other aspects of the course, please email me at the following email address: jillian.stjacques@oregonstate.edu. I check this email inbox far more often than I do my “Canvas” inbox. I typically respond to emails within 48 hours M-F. I am not online Sa-Su, so if you email me on the weekend, I will open your email on Monday during business hours. Keep this in mind when emailing time-sensitive questions (especially regarding upcoming homework assignments). The subject line of your email should include the words “WR 201” and your name. All emails must begin with a greeting that includes my name; mention what course you are enrolled in; and end with a sign-off that includes your name. For instance: “Hi Jillian, I am enrolled in your online 201 class. I have a question about….. Thanks, Student X.” One-line emails that appear without a greeting and sign-off will be returned unanswered; good communication skills are vital to any productive newsroom – or any online classroom, for that matter. Regarding grading timelines, I typically grade assignments within 10 days of their submission, although depending on the length and intricacy of the work, this timeline may vary.

Changes/Acknowledgements
The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus during the quarter. Changes will be announced on the class Canvas site.

Course Schedule
This course schedule will give you an idea of each week’s major themes and assignment due dates. Detailed requirements and evaluation criteria for all written assignments are posted on the Canvas Assignments page. All written work must be posted to the appropriate Canvas submissions link.

Week 1
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week One Module
- Examine your syllabus closely, then submit Discussion Board Assignment 0: “Introduce Yourself” (Due Sunday at 11 p.m.).
- Discussion Board Assignment 1: (first installment due Thursday at 11 p.m., then response posts due by Sunday at 11 p.m.)
- Complete “Headline Drill” by 11 pm Thursday, post on Canvas
- Complete “Leads Exercise” by 11 pm Sunday, post on Canvas

Week 2
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week Two Module.
Week 3
Pitching and News Flow, The Feature Story
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week Three Module.
- Submit your initial post for Discussion Board Assignment 3 by 11 pm Thursday, then submit your Response Posts to Classmates’ Work on the same Board by 11 pm Sunday
- Complete “Style Quiz One” by 11 pm Thursday
- Pitch your Feature Story on Canvas by 11 pm Sunday

Week 4
Storytelling techniques, Creative Lead and Nut Graf Styles, interviewing, quotation and attribution, kickers
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week Four Module.
- Submit your initial post for Discussion Board Assignment 4 by 11 pm Thursday, then submit your Response Posts to Classmates’ Work on the same Board by 11 pm Sunday
- Complete “Quotation” homework and submit on Canvas by 11 p.m. Thursday
- Continue writing your Feature Story

Week 5
Storytelling techniques, research skills, interviewing cont’d
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week Five Folder
- Submit Discussion Board Assignment 5 by 11 p.m. Thursday, then submit your Response Posts to Classmates’ Work on the same Board by 11 p.m. Sunday
- Complete “Style Quiz 2” by 11 p.m. Thursday

Week 6 Critique Week
Critique the feature stories of your peers
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week Six Folder
- Place your completed Feature Story in the Feature Story Gallery in the Week Six Module by Monday at noon
- Critique a classmate’s story in the Feature Story Gallery in the Week Six Module by 11 p.m. Friday
- Complete your Midterm Exam by 11 p.m. Sunday

Week 7
Profiles, Part I: interview skills for profile pieces
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week Seven Folder
- Submit Discussion Board Assignment 7 by 11 p.m. Thursday, then submit your Response Posts to Classmates’ Work on the same Board by 11 p.m. Sunday
- Pitch your profile story by Sunday at 11 p.m.

Week 8
Profiles, Part II: research skills for profile pieces
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week Eight Folder
- Submit Discussion Board Assignment 8 by 11 p.m. Thursday, then submit your Response Posts to Classmates’ Work on the same Board by 11 p.m. Sunday
- Complete “Style Quiz Three” by 11 p.m. Thursday.

Week 9
Media Ethics and Digital Media
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week Nine Folder
- Submit Discussion Board Assignment 9 by 11 p.m. Thursday, then submit your Response Posts to Classmates’ Posts on the same Board by 11 p.m. Sunday
Complete your Profile Story by 11 p.m. Thursday and post it in the Profile Story Gallery in the Week Ten Module.

**Week 10 Critique Week**
Critique the profile stories of your peers
- Read, watch and listen to all items in the Week Ten Folder
- Place your complete Profile Story in the Profile Story Gallery in the Week 10 Module by **Monday at noon**
- Weekly Discussion Board: Critique a classmate’s Profile Story by 11 p.m. **Friday**

**Week 11 Finals Week**
- Take your Final Exam on Canvas. The exam will open on **Monday at noon**, and will remain open until noon on **Friday of Finals Week**, at which point I will tabulate your final grades in preparation of posting them by the official deadline at 5 p.m. the following Monday.