

Advanced Reporting

Journalism 4120/6120-01

Fall 2013

1 to 2:25 p.m., Tuesdays, Thursdays

Meeman 206

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS**CATALOGUE/COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Gathering, analyzing and writing news stories about such topics as government, the courts, the economy, education, environment, and science; Students will do investigative work in the field and in the classroom, learning about both archival and computer resources

PREREQUISITE:

Jour 3120

COURSE MATERIALS:

No textbook required, but you must own an Associated Press Style Manual and must read the *Commercial Appeal* every day. Free copies of the *Commercial Appeal*, *USA Today* and *The New York Times* are available at various locations around campus, including Jones Hall, the library and the UC. You also must have access to a grammar book. The suggested book is the *First Aid For Writers: The Little Grammar Book* by our own Joe Hayden.

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

Class will be conducted through lecture and discussion and writing assignments done outside of class.

GRADING:

A 93 to 100 percent

A – 90 to 92 percent

B + 87 to 89 percent

B 83 to 86 percent

B – 80 to 82 percent

C + 77 to 79 percent

C 73 to 76 percent

C – 70 to 72 percent

D + 67 to 69 percent

D 63 to 66 percent

D – 60 to 62 percent

F

0 to 59 percent

Writing Assignments

Students will complete 13 writing assignments. The first 10 are worth 20 points. The assignments culminate in a final in-depth writing assignment, which will be worth 20 points for the first draft, 20 points for the second draft and then another 20 for the final version. Any writing assignment that is determined to have been plagiarized or fabricated will receive a zero. Late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade (2 points) for each class period it is late.

Attendance

There is 30 points available for attendance.

Quizzes

There will be 8 news quizzes during the semester. Each quiz is worth 10 points. Quizzes will be given every Tuesday in class. There are no makeup quizzes, but there is a bonus quiz at the end of the semester for whoever misses one. There will be an AP Style/Grammar quiz worth 30 points.

Writing Assignments (10 at 20 points each) –	200
News Quizzes (8 at 10 points each) -	80
AP Style/grammar quiz -	30
Attendance -	30
In-depth project -	60

GRADUATE STUDENTS/6120:

In addition to the work described above, graduate students are required to write an 8-10 page paper on a topic related to public records and public affairs reporting.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. In-depth story ideas – Aug. 29
2. Public records letter – Sept. 5
3. Bus passenger story – Sept. 12
4. Re-write bus passenger story – Sept. 19
5. City Council/commission story – Oct. 3
6. Re-write city council/commission story – Oct. 10
7. Public official story – Oct. 17
8. Re-write public official story – Oct. 24
9. Criminal court – Oct. 31
10. Re-write criminal court – Nov. 7
11. First draft in-depth project – Nov. 14
12. Second draft in-depth project – Nov. 21
13. Final draft in-depth project – Dec. 4

All deadlines must be strictly met in keeping with professional standards. Each assignment will be reduced one letter grade (2 points on regular assignments and 2 points on each of the drafts of the final project) for every class period it is late.

Memphis City Council meets the first and third Tuesdays of every month. The class will likely attend the Oct. 1 meeting. If you cannot make it, please discuss with the instructor about some alternate plans. Students must also find time to go to the courthouse to do the criminal courts story.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE FOR ADVANCED REPORTING

Week of:	Topic	Assignment Due Thursday	Quiz Tuesday
Aug. 27-29	Introduction to class/government reporting; story ideas	In-depth story ideas	
Sept. 3-5	Public records and requests; bus passenger project discussion	Public records letter	
Sept. 10-12	Plagiarism and fabrication; police/fire stories	Bus passenger story	News 1
Sept. 17-19	City council reporting; commission, school board reporting	Re-write bus passenger story	News 2
Sept. 24-26	Advanced searching on the World Wide Web No class Thursday		News 3
Oct. 1-3	Attend the City Council meeting; How to do a background search on someone	City council/commish story	News 4
Oct. 8-10	Writing a public official story; Using numbers and data	Re-write city council/commish story	
Oct. 15-17	Monday no class; using spreadsheets	Public official story	AP Style/Grammar Quiz
Oct. 22-24	Using a database; Criminal courts reporting;	Re-write public official story	News 5
Oct. 29-31	Business reporting; reporting on state government.	Criminal courts story	News 6
Nov. 5-7	Writing an election story; localizing a national political story	Re-write criminal courts story	News 7
Nov. 12-14	Putting together a big project story; property taxes, sales taxes	First draft in-depth story	News 8
Nov. 19-21	Surveys, opinion poll reporting; Legal issues of copyright; libel and invasion of privacy	Second draft in-depth story	Bonus quiz
Nov. 26-28	Presentation of final project story Thursday no class		
Dec. 3	Presentation of final project story	Finished final project story	

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM 4120:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability To Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically):

- Students will recognize and critically analyze the role the press plays as a watchdog of government and other public organizations.
- Students will develop the finer techniques of information gathering including searching public records, interviewing uncooperative or hostile news sources, sensitivity in reporting on disasters and tragedies and avoiding manipulation by political image makers and other news sources.
- Students will learn the importance of a diversified press corps and diverse news sources.
- Students will develop writing skills that emphasize fairness, balance, clarity and in-depth understanding of complex public topics.
- Students will discuss and analyze various ethical dilemmas in public affairs reporting.
- Students will learn and apply computer assisted reporting techniques
- Students will learn to discern which Internet sources are legitimate for news stories and which are not.

Performance Standards To Be Met (Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):

- Students will report on fires, police, criminal courts and public meetings, such as a City Council.
- Students will conduct an in person search of public records and bring back answers to six specific questions. Each student's questions will be different from the other students'.
- During election years, students will monitor all types of media during a two-month period and turn in an in-depth analysis of the media's coverage of the election process. These reports will be turned in at the first class after Election Day
- Students will be tested on current events and legal terminology.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to meet strict deadlines.
- Students will conclude the semester by using their acquired interview techniques, public records gathering ability and writing skills to produce an investigative or in-depth news story on a public issue involving at least six news sources. This assignment will count 20 percent of the final grade.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR ADVANCED REPORTING

Issues:

Application:

- Public Records Scavenger Hunt (students are given information to retrieve from public records), or students conduct an audit of campus administrative departments to see if they are complying with the open records laws.
- As students write public affairs stories, part of the evaluation is use of diverse sources and exercising cultural sensitivity. For example, you don't identify a person racial unless it is part of a complete physical description of a dangerous suspect still at large. Ie. The suspect was described as a white man in his late 20s with blonde hair, blue eyes and about six feet tall.
- The students writing and information gathering will be evaluated on the criteria of truth, fairness, accuracy, ethics and diversity.
- Students are graded down if they are not objective and discerning in deciding which material to put into the story and what to leave out.
- Students are taught and graded on their application of creative and ethical interview techniques.
- Students will write four stories on the subject of crime, fire, city council and criminal 3 court trials and one in-depth, multi-source story on a public affairs issue or problem.
- Whenever a story involves statistics, percentages or other numerical data, student must double check their calculations.
- Use various media to obtain secondary data.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be to

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;

- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- Awareness: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- Understanding: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
- Application: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. **You are required to check your email daily.** You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

CELLPHONES:

You must turn them off during class and zip them up in a backpack, purse or pocket.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

“Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com’s restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.