

**Advanced Reporting**

Journalism 4120/6120-001

Fall 2016

2:20 to 3:45 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays

Meeman 202

Thomas J. Hrach, Ph.D.

308 Meeman

Phone: 678-4779

thrach@memphis.edu

Office hours: 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Mondays; 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Fridays

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS****CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Writing and reporting news and in-depth feature stories on topics such as government, courts, education, science, trends and community-wide issues. The emphasis is on using public records and national sources as well as key local sources. Students will create multi-media news projects and learn how to do data-base reporting.

**PREREQUISITE:**

Jour 3120

**COURSE MATERIALS:**

The required textbooks for this class are *The Associated Press Style Manual* and *First Aid For Writers: The Little Grammar Book* by our own Joe Hayden. You must also read the newspaper every day. Free copies of the *Commercial Appeal*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *The Daily Helmsman* are available at various locations around campus, including Jones Hall, the library and the UC. We will select two journalism related films to view this semester so you will need to get access to those along with reading *The Book of Isaias: The Child of Hispanic Immigrants Seeks His Own America* by Daniel Connolly.

**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 70 to 76 percent

D + 67 to 69 percent

D 60 to 66 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 not be accepted.

1. In-depth story ideas – Aug. 24
2. Public records letter – Aug. 31
3. Police/fire story – Sept. 7
4. Re-write police/fire story – Sept. 14
5. City council story – Sept. 21
6. Re-write city council story – Sept. 28
7. Interview story – Oct. 5
8. Re-write interview story – Oct. 19
9. Off-campus event/news story – Oct. 27
10. Re-write off-campus event/news story – Nov. 2
11. First draft in-depth project – Nov. 9
12. Second draft in-depth project – Nov. 16
13. Final draft in-depth project – Nov. 23

## **In-class Exercises**

Students will complete an in-class assignment every week. The assignment will focus on the topic discussed during the week, and it is due by the end of the class period. Students cannot make up missed in-class exercises, but there will be opportunities to make up an exercise by attending one of the journalism related events during the semester and posting a few lines about it. The events that are scheduled so far are the journalism celebration at noon on Aug. 31 and the News Engagement Day event on Oct. 4 featuring CA reporter Daniel Connelly. Others will be scheduled.

More may arise as the semester proceeds.

1. Plagiarism/fabrication
2. AP Style
3. Spreadsheet
4. Census reporter
5. Sort, filter data
6. Backgrounding a person
7. Headlines
8. Search Engine Optimization
9. Google map
10. Spreadsheet final story
11. Dirty dozen grammar
12. Audio slideshow
13. Pulitzer Prize winner
14. Online site demonstration

**Quizzes**

There will be 10 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. Some of the quizzes will be on items in the news, about the book *The Book of Isaias* at least two will be on journalism related films. There will be an AP Style/Grammar quiz worth 20 points, which can be made up only by talking to the instructor in advance.

**Online sites**

Students are required to have an online site to showcase the work in the class. Each of the five story assignments is required to be on the site. The site is worth 50 points of the final grade. The online site must be produced using Word Press or if you have a site you made in Web Publishing class that can be used as well.

Assignments (10 at 20 points each) –	200
Quizzes (10 at 10 points each) -	100
AP Style/grammar quiz -	20
In-class exercises (13 at 5 points each) -	60
In-depth project -	60
Online portfolio site -	50
 Total	 500

**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.

All deadlines must be strictly met in keeping with professional standards. No late assignments will be accepted. All completed stories must be posted on students’ online portfolio sites in order to get the credit for the re-write.

**Schedule issues:**

This class is designed to get students off campus and into the community to report news. All students must attend the Memphis City Council meeting or another city meeting. The class likely will attend a Memphis City Council meeting together on Sept. 6, but those who cannot make it are welcome to attend another meeting. Students also will interview a public official and get a police or fire report and do a story about some off-campus news event. All these activities are done outside of class and must be scheduled around other classes, work schedules and personal stuff. Please plan early in the semester.

### TENTATIVE TIMETABLE FOR ADVANCED REPORTING

Week of:	Topic	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1 Aug. 22-24	Introduction to class/reporting; story ideas/plagiarism fabrication		In-depth story ideas; Exercise 1
Week 2 Aug. 29-Aug. 31	Public records letter; types of sources; discussion of AP Style	Quiz 1	Public records letter; Exercise 2
Week 3 Sept. 5-7	Writing a crime story; intro to spreadsheets	Quiz 2	Police story; Exercise 3
Week 4 Sept. 12-14	Using the web to find information; using the census for data;	Quiz 3	Re-write police story; Exercise 4
Week 5 Sept. 19-21	Writing a council/government story; sorting-filtering data on a spreadsheet	Quiz 4	City Council story; Exercise 5
Week 6 Sept. 26-28	Doing an interview; backgrounding a person	Quiz 5	Re-write city council story; Exercise 6
Week 7 Oct. 3-5	Writing headlines;	Quiz 6	Interview story; Exercise 7
Week 8 Oct. 10-12	No class on Tuesday	No class spring break	Re-write interview story;
Week 9 Oct. 17-19	Reporting on a news event; search engine optimization	Quiz 7	Off campus event/news story; Exercise 8
Week 10 Oct. 24-26	Using maps to report a story; Putting together an in-depth story	Quiz 8	Re-write off campus event/news story; Exercise 9
Week 11 Oct. 31-Nov. 2		Quiz 9	First draft final story; Exercise 10
Week 12 Nov. 7-9	Property taxes, sales taxes; grammar review	Quiz 10	Second draft final story; Exercise 11
Week 13 Nov. 14-16	Audio slide show; Pulitzer Prizes announced this week.	AP Style and grammar quiz	Third draft final story; Exercise 12
Week 14 Nov. 21-23	Finishing touches on the final project; No class on Wednesday	Bonus quiz	Online site due; Exercise 13
Week 15 Nov. 28-Nov. 30	Presentation of final project story		Exercise 14

## **FIVE PILLARS OF JOUR4120**

- *Professionalism*: Students are introduced to professionals in the news business. Also, students analyze news articles produced by professionals. Students also attend news events and are required to behave as professionals.
- *Writing*: Students are required to write four standard news stories and then complete a final in-depth reporting story. All students must also submit re-writes to each of the stories.
- *Multimedia*: Students are required to post their news stories on their online portfolio sites and along with the final in-depth reporting story students are required to have some additional multi-media element such as photographs, chart, graph, table or map. The final story must also have at least two posted links on the site.
- *Critical thinking*: Issues such as fairness, balance and ethics are discussed in the course of complete assignments.
- *Media literacy*: Students are required to read and keep up to date on news issues, which are monitored by regular news quizzes where students are required to read local media and then discuss issues in the news.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR4120:**

- 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 police, criminal courts and public meetings such as a City Council.
- Students will conduct an in person search of public records
- 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 at the first class after Election Day
- Students will be tested on current events.
- 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 JOUR4120**

*Awareness:*

- Through class discussions and news quizzes students will become aware of issues in the news such as diversity, cultural sensitivity and ethics.

*Understanding*

- As students write public affairs stories, part of the evaluation is use of diverse sources and exercising cultural sensitivity. 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.

*Application:*

- Students will write four stories on the subject of crime, fire, city council and criminal 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**

### **PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:**

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### **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.

### **MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. 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.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

“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.

**DEADLINES:**

Remember there’s a reason “DEAD” makes up half the word “deadline.” All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don’t know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

**DISABILITY:**

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

**DIVERSITY:**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

**WEATHER POLICY:**

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.