

JOUR 110: Writing, Reporting and Ethics

Fridays 11 a.m. to 1:45 p.m., Manzanita Hall 361

Professor: Lori Baker-Schena

Office: Manzanita Hall 329

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2 to 5 p.m.; Wednesdays 2 to 5 p.m.

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Prerequisite: C or better in ENG 155 or its equivalent

Textbooks

- *Reporting for the Media*, Ninth Edition, by John R. Bender, Lucinda D. Davenport, Michael W. Drager and Fred Fedler
- *Associated Press Stylebook*
- *Shaking the Foundations: 200 Years of Investigative Journalism in America*, edited by Bruce Shapiro

Overview

Writing is one of the core competencies of journalism. Even though the methods of message delivery continue to evolve thanks to the Internet, the need for strong writing skills remains vital. This course is designed as an introduction to news writing, with a focus on reporting, interviewing, note-taking, editing, news judgment and professional ethics.

You will receive intense training through lectures, in-class exercises and weekly homework assignments. Particular emphasis will be placed on mastering grammar, punctuation and Associated Press style. In addition, you will be introduced to writing news within different fields of journalism, including broadcasting and public relations. By the end of the semester, you should be proficient in interviewing and note taking, know how to identify good news stories and sources, have honed your critical thinking skills, and be able to write news and feature stories, profiles and obituaries.

To provide an historic perspective of the power of journalism, you will also read the Journalism Department community text, *Shaking the Foundations: 200 Years of Investigative Journalism in America*.

At least three hours of classroom and three hours of outside lab work are required each week. In addition, you should expect to spend at least six more hours outside of class completing your reading and writing homework assignments.

Preparation

You are expected to be FULLY prepared for each class. This entails doing your reading assignments, studying for your weekly quizzes, completing your editing worksheets and writing assignments, and reading the *Los Angeles Times* on a daily basis. In addition, you are expected to be prepared to participate in class discussions, which will cover current events, the lecture topics and required textbook readings.

Attendance

Since this class meets for only three hours once a week, attendance is mandatory. If you are absent, you will miss in-class exercises and quiz points that cannot be made up, as well as extremely important information covered in lectures and class discussions.

Attendance will be taken at the start of every class. You are expected to arrive on time to every class. If you cannot make it to class due to a medical situation, family emergency or religious holiday, you **MUST** call or email me prior to the start of class. It also will be your responsibility to contact a classmate for lecture notes and the homework assignment. Without a doubt, absences and tardies will negatively impact your grade. This cannot be stressed enough.

Late Assignments

You must turn in your assignments on time. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DUE DATE.** Work must be turned in promptly at the start of class to receive full credit. If you walk into class late, your paper will be accepted but you must write a large "L" on the cover prior to turning it in. These "L" papers cannot receive an A grade. No papers will be accepted after the end of class. If you call in absent, you must email the assignment to me prior to the starting time of class. Unless assignments are emailed prior to the class start time, they will not qualify for credit.

Communicating with the Professor

Please feel encouraged to call or email me to discuss any aspects of this class. You will receive the quickest response via email: bscomm@ca.rr.com. I will give you my cell phone and home phone numbers during our first meeting. You are very welcome to call before 9 p.m. any night.

Evaluation

You will be graded on six class components for a possible total of 600 points:

1. **Ten weekly writing assignments** – Six of these assignments are worth 25 points, three are worth 50 points and one is worth 70 points, for a possible total of 370 points.
 - The six 25-point assignments will be based on assigned readings and lectures, and cover an array of skills, including reporting, interviewing, note-taking, editing and news judgment.
 - The three 50-point assignments are outside writing assignments that require you to report on events occurring on the CSUN campus.
 - The 70-point assignment involves locating a print or broadcast journalist, conducting an in-depth interview and writing a 5- to 7-page paper.
2. **News Quizzes** – I will give 11 quizzes on the week's news events, each worth 5 points. The questions will be based on articles appearing in the *Los Angeles Times*. I will drop the lowest quiz grade. This assignment is worth a total of 50 points. There will be no makeup quizzes.
3. **Textbook Chapter Quizzes** – I will give 11 quizzes on the assigned readings including, *Reporting for the Media* and the *Associated Press Stylebook*, each worth 5 points. I will drop the lowest quiz grade. This assignment is worth a total of 50 points. There will be no makeup quizzes.
4. **Community Reading Quizzes**: I will give 11 quizzes on the assigned readings from *Shaking the Foundations: 200 Years of Investigative Journalism in America*, each worth 3 points. I will drop the lowest quiz grade. This assignment is worth a total of 30 points. There will be no makeup quizzes.
5. **Final Exam** – This assignment is designed to serve as a culmination of the knowledge gained in class this semester. A combination of an in-class news writing assignment and a short-answer test, the final exam is worth 50 points.
6. **Attendance and Participation** – This component is worth 50 points.

Grade Range

600-540 points = A

539-480 points = B

479-420 points = C

419-360 points = D

Below 360 points = Fail

The + and – grading system will be used.

Cultural Diversity

To ensure that your work reflects the diversity of the community, you are strongly encouraged to broaden your public relations experiences by focusing your assignments on ethnic, racial and religious minorities; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other similar groups.

Plagiarism/Cheating

The CSUN Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated, and anyone caught cheating will be reported to the University for possible further action. For a further explanation of the behavior defined as academic dishonesty, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 587-588 of the 2008-2010 CSUN catalog. Remember, too, that passing off information taken from the Internet as your own is plagiarism and carries the penalties outlined above.

CLASS SCHEDULE

(pending approval of furlough days for faculty)

August 28:

The World of News Reporting: An Introduction

September 4:

Writing Assignment: Autobiography

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #1: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 2, pp. 9-21, and Chapter 6; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters A and B

News Quiz #1

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #1: "Flogging Through the Fleet," "Pauperism in the Tenements," "Lynching of Innocent Men (Lynched on Account of Relationship)"

Lecture/Discussion: Selecting and Reporting the News

September 11:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #1

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #2: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 2, pp. 22-31, and Chapter 7; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters C and D

News Quiz #2

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #2: "The Condemned-Meat Industry: A Reply to Mr. J. Ogden Armour"

Lecture/Discussion: Writing Basic News Leads

September 18:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #2

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #3: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 3, pp. 32-42, and Chapter 9; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters E and F

News Quiz #3

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #3: "The Suppressed Tobacco Story"

Lecture/Discussion: Writing the Body of a News Story

September 25:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #3

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #4: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 3, pp. 43-54, and Chapter 10; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters G and H

News Quiz #4

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #4: "The Blast in Centralia No. 5: A Mine Disaster No One Stopped"

Lecture/Discussion: Writing Quotations and Attributions

October 2:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #4

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #5: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 3, pp. 55-64, and Chapter 8; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters I and J

News Quiz #5

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #5: "The Klavaliens Ride to a Fall," "Anatomy of a Hate Group"

Lecture/Discussion: Writing Alternative Leads

October 9:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #5

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #6: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 4, pp. 65-75, and Chapter 11; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters K and L

News Quiz #6

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #6: "And No Birds Sing"

Lecture/Discussion: Interviewing Techniques

October 16:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #6

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #7: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 4, pp. 76-85, and Chapter 12; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters M and N

News Quiz #7

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #7: "The My Lai Massacre"

Lecture/Discussion: Writing Obituaries

October 23: **FURLOUGH DAY**, No Class

October 30:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #7 – **Interview With Reporter Paper Due**

News Reading Assignment, Quiz #8: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 4, pp. 86-94, and Chapter 15; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters Q, R and S

News Quiz #8

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #8: "The Prison Business"

Lecture/Discussion: Writing Feature Stories

November 6: **FURLOUGH DAY**, No Class

November 13:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #8

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #9: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 5, pp. 95-106, and Chapter 18; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters T and U

News Quiz #9

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #9: "Corporate Crime of the Century"

Lecture/Discussion: Writing for Broadcast

November 20:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #9

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #10: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 5, pp. 107-117, and Chapter 19; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters V and W

News Quiz #10

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #10: "Death Row Justice Derailed"

Lecture/Discussion: Writing for Public Relations

November 27: **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**, No Class

December 4:

Writing Assignment: Assignment #10

News Reading Assignment and Quiz #11: *Reporting for the Media*, Chapter 5, pp. 117-125, and Chapters 20 and 21; *Associated Press Stylebook*, Letters X, Y and Z

News Quiz #11

Community Reading Assignment and Quiz #11: "These Dark Satanic Mills"

Lecture/Discussion: Libel and Ethics

December 11: 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. **Final Exam**