COMM 3312.001  NEWSWRITING FOR TELEVISION, RADIO AND THE INTERNET  
Fall, 2011

Ruth Aipperspach, Instructor  
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Ruth.aipperspach@tamucc.edu

Office Hours  
Monday 3:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.  
Tuesday 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.  
Wednesday 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Thursday 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.; 6 to 7 p.m.  
Or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to teach students news collecting, interviewing, writing, and editing for Television, Radio and the Internet.

COURSE MATERIALS:

1 pencil or pen with eraser  
1 reporter notebook for news reporting  
writing paper for in-class news drafts;  
2 Blue Books for exams  
1 Folder with pockets (with name on front)  
access to a Dictionary

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GOALS: The goals of this course are to introduce the student to broadcast and internet newswriting and learn the techniques used to select, and write copy for a newscast in appropriate format. This course will also teach students how the gatekeeper effect, and agendas determine story selection and time requirements. Pronunciation and phonetic guidelines will help students’ oral skills and performance. Students will also learn an grasp convergence styles of newswriting. Mid-term and Final exams will test competency, proficiency and understanding of basic newswriting principles.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of semester, students will:
(1) Recognize the basic elements that make up a broadcast and internet news story, and be able to choose the ones that tell the story most effectively; preparing students for entry level positions in media.
(2) Recognize and interpret legal issues, media ethics, and libel/slander issues affecting future News assignments in media
Note: All students will write and complete 8 in-class assignments, two university-related news stories; and 3 outside assignments. One of the latter will be re-written for an on-line website to meet the convergence aspect of this course.

ATTENDANCE: This course is both a performance and participatory class. Absences for medical, work-related, emergency situations with documentation will be excused, otherwise three or more absences will incur a three point deduction from the final grade. Leaving class early will be counted as an absence; three tardy’s will count as one absence.

NOTE: All deadlines listed on the Syllabus will be adhered to, and that includes the week leading up to Thanksgiving and post Thanksgiving.

CLASS POLICIES:
1. Each week there will be textbook discussion and analysis. If you note any examples from local, national, or cable newscasts, and any Internet news sites that you think are worth mentioning, I welcome it.
2. Most weeks, an in-class rough draft of news copy will be written, then students will type the re-write copy in proper format using 14 pt. font. Submit both copies in your folder. Due: T-R class: on or before Thursday 2 p.m.
   Monday p.m. class: on or before 4:00 p.m. Thursday in my office; otherwise a zero grade will be recorded.
3. Do not e-mail the Instructor any assignments other than critiques.
   A hard copy is needed for grading purposes.
4. No assignment will be accepted after the deadline unless it is a major problem such as a car accident, illness, etc., with documentation. (Contact the Instructor that same day).
5. If you miss an exam, contact the instructor within 24 hours.
6. NOTE:
   (a) To avoid distractions in the classroom at all times, please turn off cell phones, ipods, CDs, ear phones, and other technology at the beginning of every class and put them in your bag. These are a distraction to both the Instructor and students. If a student’s cell phone causes a distraction during some student oral/written assignment, that student will incur a three point deduction off his/her final grade.
   (b) Do not check your phone during class, and don’t leave the classroom to make or answer a call. That can wait until you leave the classroom at the end of the class period.
   NO TEXTING messages during class time.
   (c) Anyone using a Laptop must sit near the front row to avoid distractions. Laptops are for taking Lecture notes only, so please let the Instructor know.
   (d) During mid-term and final exams turn off all cell phones or other technological equipment. For anyone using a cell phone or other equipment during an exam, the Instructor will remove that student’s exam and consider it finished.
7. NO FOOD OR DRINK IN THE CLASSROOM DURING CLASS PERIOD
8. Preferred method of scholarly citations where appropriate will be MLA style

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work). In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero.

CLASSROOM/PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

ACADEMIC ADVISING If you are majoring, or planning to major, in a field taught in the College of Liberal Arts, and if you have not yet obtained a signed degree plan, you should see your Academic Advisor immediately. Degree plans are important and useful to successful progress toward graduation. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood, and can be reached at 825-3466.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in Driftwood 101.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
FYI: All students are encouraged to sign up for an Islander e-mail account. Islander e-mail is critical for university communication in any weather related situations, or other emergencies. Students may contact the Instructor by phone, Islander e-mail, or visit in my office in Bay Hall, 372.

DROPPING A CLASS: I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. (………………) is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W”.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS:
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01 Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University rules Web site at http://www.tamu.cc/provost/university_rules/index.htm. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

This Syllabus describes the day to day class schedule. If any changes are made due to illness, inclement weather, or other reasons, etc., the Instructor has the right to make alterations and those changes will be announced in class.

Grades:

8 newstories, Assignments # 1, #2, #3 and 2 university events 50 %
Mid-term and Final Exams 25 %
Assignments #4, #5, #6 (convergence) 25 %

A = 100-90;  B = 89-80;  C = 79-70;  D = 69-60;  F = don’t ask)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity/Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 25</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Intro: Writing/Working in the Electronic News Media</td>
<td>ch. 1 Writing the News Story. What is News? ch. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Writing visually</td>
<td>ch. 2 pp., 28-30; 312, 343/ Pronunciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 1</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Pronunciation Guide // Editing and re-writing, ch. 8 In-class assignments</td>
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<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Writing the News Script</td>
<td>ch. 3 News story #1 in class – no draft, no makeups</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Pronunciation Guide Writing leads</td>
<td>ch. 4, pp. 88-89 / Editing (ch. 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>News Selection &amp; assignments</td>
<td>ch. 5 Begin draft of News story #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Editing, leads, ch.4, pp. 95-96 In-class assignment on writing Business/financial news copy Pronunciation Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>3-student newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (2 groups = 6 students) Pronunciation Guide Discuss Assignment #1 Begin draft of News story #3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Work on story details Attributions/quotations</td>
<td>ch. 1-2 News story #4 in class - no draft, no makeups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>3-student newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (2 groups = 6 students) Interviews, Soundbites, ch. 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3-student newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (2 groups = 6 students) Features &amp; Interviews - ch. 6 Pronunciation Guide</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Introduction to Radio &amp; formats, (ch. 11) &amp; University Events News story #5 to be done in class - no draft or makeups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Mid-term Exam (Blue Book – subjective, research based questions) Assignment #1 due</td>
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(R. Aipperspach)

Oct.  11  Tu  Story Order (ch. 11)
Pronunciation Guide
Introduction to Assignment #2

13  R  3-student newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (2 groups = 6 students)
convergence
Pronunciation Guide
Practice newswriting in radio format

18  Tu  Introduction to the Internet and convergence
Begin draft of News story # 6

20  R  Convergence  Introduction to Assignment #6 (Final Project)
Look at various web sites, and their construction & news formats.

25  Tu  NUECES COUNTY SAFE COMMUNITIES COALITION
Presentation (guest speaker)
Discussion and in-class assignment
Introduction to Assignment #3

27  R  Assignment #2: 6 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guests

Nov.  1  Tu  Assignment #2: 6 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guests
News story #7 done in class – no make up  (? Elections)

Nov  3  R  Assignment # 2: 6 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guests

8  Tu  Assignment #2 : 6 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guests

10  R  Introduction to Public Relations writing (ch. 8  (pp. 173-175)
www.prnewswire.com  Check MyWay.com for sports

15  Tu  Writing for the Internet  www.ksal.com
Discussion on legal aspects ( ch. 13-14)
Last day to submit the second University news story.

17  R  Legal & Ethics in newswriting (ch. 13-14)
www.Broadcastlaw.com
In all news assignments, objectivity is important: report what you see and hear

NOTE: (1) times for Pronunciation Oral (#5) will be determined later in the semester – late October to early November.
(2) Assignment #6 : Convergence website location: TBA

FYI:
check www.tab.org and www.tpra.com for job possibilities

Note: See Handout for dress code (for outside assignments and videotaping assignments in class)

“Don’t lie; Don’t embellish; Tell the Truth”
Brigadier General James K. Brown,
Deputy Commander Logistics, Texas National Guard
August 12, 2010 at the Texas Association of Broadcasters conference, Austin, Texas
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(R. Aipperspach)  Grade Sheet

NEWswriting (50 %)
8 news stories @ up to 20 pts each - plus 2 University Events news stories @ up to 30 pts. each
#1 ________ / 20
#2 ________ / 20
#3 ________ / 20
#4 ________ / 20
#5 ________ / 20
#6 ________ / 20
#7 ________ / 20
#8 ________ / 20

Radio: Univ. Event ___/ 30
Radio: Univ. Event ___/ 30

Assignment #1 _____ / 50
Assignment #2 _____ / 50
Assignment #3 _____ / 50

Total __________________ / 370 pts


EXAMS (25 %)
Mid term Exam ________ 100 pts
Final Exam ________ 100 pts

Total ________________ / 200 pts

ASSIGNMENT #4 , #5, #6 (25 %)
#4 Newscast + evaluation ________ / 50 pts
#5 Oral Pronunciation Exam ________ / 50 pts
#6 Final Project (Convergence assignment) ________ / 50 pts

--- Extra credit of 30 pts for ISLAND WAVES news story factored in only if the student completes the assignment.

Total: __________________ / 150 pts

Grand total possible: 720 pts + 30 Ex. Credit.