COMM 3312.002    NEWSWRITING FOR TELEVISION, RADIO AND THE INTERNET.
Fall, 2011

Ruth Aipperspach, Instructor
Bay Hall, Room 372
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Ruth.aipperspach@tamucc.edu

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

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

GOALS: The goals of this course are to introduce the student to broadcast and internet newswriting and learn the basic techniques used to select, and write copy for a newscast in appropriate formats. 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 on camera assignments. Mid-term and Final exams will test competency, proficiency and understanding of basic newswriting principles. Students will also learn and grasp convergence styles of newswriting.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of semester, students will:
(1) Recognize the basic elements that make up a 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, & libel/slander issues for future news Assignments in media.
All students will write and complete 8 in-class news writing 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 later in proper format using 14 pt. font. Submit both copies in your folder for a grade.
   **Due:** T-R class: on or before Thursday 2 p.m.
   **Monday p.m. class:** on or before 4 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.
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 examination 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 American 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 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 grad 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 website at http://www.tamucc.edu/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:

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>8 newstories, Assignments #1, #2, #3 and 2 university events</td>
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<td>Mid-term and Final exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments #4, #5, #6 (convergence)</td>
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A = 100-90;  B = 89-80;  C = 79 - 70;  D = 69 - 60;  F = don’t ask.
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| Aug 30 | M   | Introduction Writing in the Electronic Media (ch. 1)  
|        |     | Pronunciation Guide  
|        |     | What is News? (ch. 4) |
| Sept. 6 | M   | LABOR DAY – no class |
| Sept. 13 | M  | Writing for the Visual Medium ; Writing for the Ear (ch. 2)  
|        |     | Policies p. 312, 343  
|        |     | Pronunciation Guide  
|        |     | News story #1 (done in class) |
| Sept. 20 | M  | Writing leads (ch. 4, pp. 88-89)  
|        |     | Story Selection (ch. 5)  
|        |     | Pronunciation Guide  
|        |     | News story #2 |
| Sept. 27 | M  | 3-person newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (3 groups = 9 students)  
|        |     | Pronunciation, Editing, attribution, leads for newscasts  
|        |     | News story #3 |
| Oct. 4 | M   | 3-person newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (3 groups = 9 students)  
|        |     | Pronunciation guide / story details  
|        |     | Features & Interviews (ch. 6-7)  
|        |     | Newscast story #4 |
| Oct. 11 | M   | Mid Term Exam (Blue Book – Subjective & Objective, plus research topic)  
|        |     | Assignment #1 due |
| Oct. 18 | M   | 3-person newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (2 groups = 6 students)  
|        |     | Pronunciation Guide  
|        |     | Introduction to Radio formats, University Events & Assignment #2 prep  
|        |     | News story #5 (in class) |
| Oct. 25 | M   | Introduction to Internet & convergence (Introduce Assignment #3)  
|        |     | Story Order (ch. 11) Preparation for Assignment #2 - Interviews  
|        |     | News story #6 (in class) |
| Nov. 1 | M   | Assignment #2 – 8 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guest  
|        |     | Discussion on (1) Internet and convergence; (2) web sites  
|        |     | Check [www.kristv.com](http://www.kristv.com), [www.kiijtv.com](http://www.kiijtv.com), [www.caller.com](http://www.caller.com), [www.tbo.com](http://www.tbo.com)  
|        |     | Introduction to Final Project #6 - convergence |
Nov. 8 M  Assignment #2 – 8 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guest
Internet & convergence discussion

Nov. 15 M  Assignment #2 – 8 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guest
Begin introduction to Legal & Ethical aspects. (ch. 13-14) check:
www.Broadcastlaw.com
Last day to complete and turn in second University news story
News story #7

Nov. 22 M  NUECES COUNTY SAFE COMMUNITIES COALITION presentation
(guest speaker)
Discussion on Internet and convergence; and legal aspects
Final day to turn in Final Project draft (Convergence hard copy)***

Nov. 29 M  Introduction to PR writing  (ch. 8, pp. 173-175)
Assignment #3 due
All critiques from Assignment #2 due today

Dec. 6 M  Research, Ratings & Promotion (ch. 12)
News story #8 on convergence  (in class)
Last day to e-mail Final Project convergence article for inclusion on the web site

Dec. 12  FINAL EXAM  (7:15 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.)  (Blue Book : subjective, objective &
research questions)  No exams will be given in advance

In all news writing assignments, objectivity is important: report what you see and hear.
NOTE: times for Pronunciation Oral (#5) will be determined later in the semester in late
October – early November.

FYI:  check:
2.  www.tab.org lists job possibilities in various broadcasting positions.
3.  tpra.com lists public relations openings.
4.  Convergence website (assignment #6 :TBA)
5.  See Assignment Handout for dress code for outside assignments and videotaped presentations
in class.

.Fatal 8, don’t embellish; Tell the Truth”
Brigadier General James K. Brown,
Deputy Commander Logistics, Texas National Guard
Texas Association of Broadcasters convention, August 12, 2010
**Grading Sheet**

**NEWSWRITING (50 %)**
8 news stories @ up to 20 pts each plus 2 University Events news stories @ up to 30 pts each

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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 %)**

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Extra credit of 30 pts for ISLAND WAVES news story factored in only if the Student submits the article to the IW.

Total: _____________ / 150 pts

Grand total possible: 720 pts + 30 Ex. Credit