COMM 3312.002 NEWSWRITING FOR TELEVISION, RADIO AND THE INTERNET.

Fall, 2012

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Office Hours: Mondays 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tuesdays 1:00 p.m. to 2 p.m.
Wednesday 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Thursday 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.; 6:00 to 7:00 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. (This will become your portfolio)
1 flashdrive
access to a Dictionary

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GOALS: The goals of this course are to introduce the student to television and radio (audio) and internet writing and learn the techniques used to select, and write copy for a newscast in appropriate format and learn internet styles of newswriting. 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. 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 media ethics, libel/slander issues future news assignments.
All students will write and complete 8 in-class news writing assignments, two university-related news stories; and 3 outside assignments. Social media formats will be introduced.

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 Reading the text on-line, and/or 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 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:  The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Notice to Students with Disabilities:  Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible. Please have your accommodation letter from Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi Disability Services (DS) Office with you when you come to see me. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Disability Services Office located in 116 Corpus Christi Hall, at (361) 825.3466.

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:
- 8 newstories, Assignments #1, #2, #3, 2 university events, & Social Media 50 %
- Mid-term and Final exams 25 %
- Assignments #4, and #5 25%

A = 100-90;  B = 89-80;  C = 79 - 70;  D = 69 - 60;  F = don’t ask.
Part I: Television (video) formats and related assignments

Aug 27 M  Introduction: Writing/Working in News Media (ch. 1)
What is News? (ch. 2)
Introduction to Pronunciation Guide
Readability / Words (ch. 3-4)
Introduce Assignment #1 (civic affairs)

Sept. 3 M  ---- LABOR DAY – no class

Sept. 10 M  Phrases and Phrasing, & Editing (ch. 5)
Sentence leads and endings (ch. 6-7) & assignments
Introduction to video formats (ch. 12-13) & video formats
Pronunciation Guide
News story #1 in class (no makeups)

Sept. 17 M  Editing
In-class assignment on reviewing Business/financial news copy
Pronunciation Guide
Introduce newscast (Assignment #4) and requirements
Students sign up for newscast group
News story #2

Sept. 24 M  3-person newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (3 groups = 9 students)
Pronunciation, Editing assignments, attribution/quotations (p. 233--)
Stories (ch. 8) Crime (ch. 20),
Discuss Assignment #1 (civic affairs)
News story #3

Oct. 1 M  3-person newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (2 groups = 6 students)
Pronunciation guide
Discuss Assignment #1 (Civic Affairs)
Features and Interviews, Soundbites, (ch. 10, p. 160) and sign up for
Interview schedule
News story story #4

Oct. 8 M  Mid Term Exam (Blue Book – Subjective & Objective, plus research
Based Questions).
Assignment #1 (Civic Affairs) due
Part II  Introduction to radio (audio) formats & assignments

Oct. 15  M  3 person newscasts. Videotaped Assignment #4 (2 groups = 6 students)
Pronunciation Guide / Assignment #2 preparation
Introduction to radio (audio) & formats (ch. 11)
Assign coverage of University events for #1 and #2 assignments
Weather & Natural phenomenon (ch. 18 p. 206 --)
News story #5

Oct. 22 M  3-person newscasts, videotaped Assignment #4 (2 groups = 6 students)
Writing in radio (audio) formats / Environmental Reporting (p. 239)
Pronunciation guide
**Bring sports copy to class for radio/audio writing assignment (ch. 28)
Begin News story #6

Oct. 29  M  Assignment #2 – 8 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guest
Writing on sports events
Introduction to Assignment #3 (Fine Arts)

Part III  Newswriting for the Internet (Convergence, Multimedia and Online News) ch.14

Nov.5 M  Assignment #2 – 8 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guest
***University Event #1 due **Discussion on election coverage
And bring to next class some election information
Introduction to on-line writing (ch. 14, 16). Look at various formats & Websites

Nov. 12 M  Assignment #2 – 8 students conduct 7 min. Interview with guest
Begin News story #7 on election results (Instructor to explain)

Nov 19 M  Ethics and the RTNDA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (ch. 22)
Check www.Broadcastlawblog.com www.ajr/prg
 www.iwantmedia.com www.mrc.org
Last day to complete and turn in second University news story
Assign: Take Home Exam (Final Exam Section A – internet based)

Nov. 26 M  Writing for the Internet & Social Media (ch. 15-16)
Discussion on Social Media impact Assignment #3 (Fine Arts) due
Dec. 3 M News story #8 on convergence

Dec. 10 M FINAL EXAM (Section B) (7:15 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.)
(Blue Book : subjective, objective & research questions)
No exams will be given in advance
Turn in Final Exam Section A

(see page 4 for overall grade criteria)

In all news writing assignments, fairness, accuracy and objectivity are 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.

“Don’t lie, 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
COMM 3312.002 NEWSWRITING FOR RADIO, TELEVISION & THE INTERNET   p.7
(R. Aipperspach)   Grading Sheet

NEWSWRITING (50 %)

#1 ________ / 20
#2 ________ / 20
#3_______ / 20
#4_______ / 20
#5_______ / 20
#6_______ / 20
#7_______ / 20
#8_______ / 20

Uni. Event ___ / 30
Uni. Event ___ / 30
2 Social Media ___ / 15
(Facebook = 10; Twitter – 5)
Assignment #1 ___ / 50
Assignment #2 ___ / 50
Assignment #3 ___ / 50

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EXAMS (25 %)

Mid term Exam ________ 100 pts
Final Exam ________ 100 pts (Section A & Section B)

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ASSIGNMENT #4, #5, (25 %)

#4 Newscast __________ / 60 pts
#5 Oral Pronunciation Exam ________ / 50 pts

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

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