COMM 3312.001  NEWSWRITING FOR TELEVISION, RADIO AND THE INTERNET  
Fall, 2013

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OFFICE HOURS: or by appointment  
Monday  3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Tuesday  12:45:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.  
Wednesday  3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Thursday  12:45 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.; 5:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

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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:  
Text:  Papper, Robert A.  Broadcast News and Writing Style Book, 5th ed.  Boston:  
Pearson.  2013

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: 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 affecting future news 
assignments
Note: All students will write and complete 8 in-class assignments, two university-related news stories; 3 outside assignments and 4 Twitter messages.

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 draft of news copy will be written, then students will type the copy in proper format using 14 pt. font. Submit the typed copy in your folder for a grade.
   Due: T-R class: on or before Thursday 2 p.m.
   Monday p.m. class: on or before 4:00 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)
5. If you miss an exam, contact the instructor within 24 hours. All classes leading up to Thanksgiving and the week after Thanksgiving are regular class days. All schedules will be adhered to.

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 textbook 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 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 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 203E, 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 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) 825.5816. 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.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.
Part I: Television (video) formats and related assignments

Week 1
Sept. 5. R  Introduction: Writing/Working in News Media  （ch. 1）
            What is News?  （ch. 2）
            Introduction to Pronunciation Guide
            Introduce Civic Affairs assignment

Week 2
Sept. 10 Tu  Readability / Words (ch. 3-4) Phrases & Phrasing, & Editing  （ch. 5）
            Pronunciation Guide
            Introduction to 3-student newscasts & requirements

Sept. 12 R  Introduction to television (ch. 12-13) & video formats
            Sign up for newscast groups
            News story #1 in class – no draft, no makeups

Week 3
Sept. 17 Tu  Attributions / quotations  (.p. 233…)
            Begin News story #2 in class – due Thursday

Sept. 19 R  Pronunciation Guide
            Sentence leads and endings (ch. 6-7) & look at formatted copy

Week 4
Sept 24 Tu  3-student newscasts, videotaped  （3 groups = 9 students）
            Begin News story #3 in class – due Thursday

26 R  Editing, assignments. Discuss Civic Affairs assignment
            Stories (ch. 8) Crime  （ch. 20）

Week 5
Oct 1 Tu  3-student newscasts, videotaped  （3 groups = (9 students）
            Features and Interviews, Soundbites (ch. 10, pp. 160--)

3 R  3-student newscasts, videotaped  （2 groups = 6 students）
            Discussion on Interviews – ch. 10  Pronunciation Guide
            News story #4
Week 6
Oct 8 Tu  Finalize preparations for Interviews
            Pronunciation Guide
            News story #5 to be done in class – no draft or makeups

10 R  Mid-term exam (Blue Book) – subjective, research based questions
            Civic Affairs assignment due at the beginning of class.

Part II: Introduction to radio (audio) formats and assignments

Week 7
Oct 15 Tu  Introduction to Radio (audio) formats (ch. 11)
            Assign coverage of news stories # 9 and #10 to cover two University events
            Instructor to give details.
            Pronunciation Guide
            Weather & Natural phenomenon (ch. 18 p. 206--)
            News story #6 to be done in class - no draft or makeups

17 R  Six students conduct 6-7 min. Interviews with guests in class OR tape a
            3 min. feature solo standup.

Week 8
Oct. 22 Tu  Radio newswriting: Environmental Reporting (p. 239)

24 R  Six students conduct 6-7 min. Interviews with guests in class OR
            Tape a 3 min. feature solo standup
            Practice newswriting in radio formats (voicer report)
            Pronunciation Guide

Week 9
Oct 29 Tu  Radio newswriting assignment: Health News
            Pronunciation guide
            Begin News story # 6- due Thursday

31 R  Bring sports copy to class for radio/audio writing assignment (ch. 18)
            Look at various web sites, and their construction & news formats
Week 10
Nov 5  Tu  NUECES COUNTY SAFE COMMUNITIES COALITION
Presentation (guest speaker)
Discussion and in-class assignment
Introduction to Fine Arts assignment

6  R  Six students conduct 6-7 minute interview; OR tape a 3 min feature solo standup.

Part III: Newswriting for the Interner (convergence, multimedia & on-line news) (ch.14,16)

Week 11
Nov. 12  Tu  Six students conduct 6-7 minute interview, OR tape a 3 min. feature solo standup
Intro to online reporting (ch. 14,16)

Nov 14  R  Students to bring selected copy for online writing (ch. 14, 16)
News story #7

Week 12
Nov. 19  Tu  Last day to turn in University news stories, #9, #10
Note differences between newspaper websites, and radio/television sites

21  R  Ethics and the RTNDA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (ch. 22)
www.broadcastinglawblog.com as well as current examples and concerns
Introduce: Take Home Exam (Final Exam Section A - internet based)

Week 13
Nov 26  Tu  on-line writing assignments. (ch. 14, 16)
Look at various formats and websites
Fine Arts assignment due at beginning of class.

28  R  THANKSGIVING DAY – no class
Week 14
Dec 3  Tu  Writing for the Internet & Social Media (ch. 15-16)
Discussion on Social Media impact

5  R  News story # 8 on convergence done in-class - no make-ups

Week 15
Dec 10 Tu  In-class assignments.

Dec 12  R  **Final Exam** (1:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.) (Section B)- Blue Book –
subjective, objective, research based questions
Turn in Take Home Exam Section A
(No exams will be given in advance)

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**Grades:**

- 8 news stories, outside assignments, + 2 University events 50%
- Oral Exam, mid term, and Final Exams 25%
- Newscast and 4 Twitter messages 25%

(A = 100-90; B = 89-90; C = 79-70; D = 69-60; F = don’t ask)
In all news writing assignments, fairness, accuracy and objectivity are important: report what you see and hear.

NOTE: (1) times for Pronunciation Oral exam will be scheduled by late October to early November.

FYI: Check:
1. [www.JournalismJobs.com](http://www.JournalismJobs.com) for a listing of possible scholarships, internships, and job listings
2. [www.tab.org](http://www.tab.org) lists job possibilities in various broadcasting positions
3. tpra.com lists public relations openings
4. Check the website Interships.com for broadcast internships, internships with sports, and a host of other internship categories, etc.
5. See Assignment Handout for dress code for outside assignments, and videotaped in-class newscasts and interviews.

“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 %)

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

#9   Radio: Univ. Event ______ / 30
#10 Radio: Univ. Event ______ / 30

Civic Affairs ______/ 50
Interview OR Solo ______/ 50
Fine Arts ______/ 50

EXAMS  (25 %)

Oral exam ________ 30 pts
Mid term Exam ________ 100 pts
Final Exam ________ 100 pts  (Section A and Section B)

ASSIGNMENT S  (25 %)

Newscast ________ / 50 pts
4 Twitter Messages ________ / 20 pts

--- Extra credit of 30 pts for ISLAND WAVES news story factored in only if the student
completes the assignment.  (one time only)  Must be proofread and approved by the
Instructor and submitted by November 1, 2013