COMM 3312.002  NEWSWRITING FOR TELEVISION, RADIO AND THE INTERNET.
Fall, 2013

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OFFICE HOURS:
Mondays 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. or by appointment
Tuesdays 12:45 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:

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.
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All students will write and complete 8 in-class news writing assignments, two university-related news stories; 3 outside assignmentsand 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 a draft of news copy will be written, then students will type the copy later in proper format using 14 pt. font and submit in your folder.
   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 wil 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, 3 outside assignments, 2 university events  50%
- Oral, Mid-term and Final exams  25%
- Newscast and 4 Twitter messages  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

Week 1
Sept 9 M  Introduction: Writing/Working in News Media (ch. 1)
What is News? (ch. 2) Types of stories
Introduction to Pronunciation Guide
Introduce Civic Affairs assignment

Week 2
Sept. 16 M  Phrases and Phrasing, & Editing (ch. 5)
Sentence leads and endings (ch. 6-7) & assignments
Introduction to video formats (ch. 12-13)
Pronunciation Guide
News story #1 in class (no makeups)

Week 3
Sept. 23 M  Pronunciation Guide
Introduce 3-person newscast and requirements
Attributions/quotations (p. 233--)
Students sign up for newscast group
News story #2 - due Thursday by 4 p.m.

Week 4
Sept. 30 M  3-person newscasts, videotaped (3 groups = 9 students)
Pronunciation,
Stories (ch. 8) Crime (ch. 20),
Features and Interviews, Soundbites, (ch. 10, p. 160)
News story #3 – due Thursday by 4 p.m.

Week 5
Oct. 7 M  3-person newscasts, videotaped (3 groups = 9 students)
Pronunciation guide
Discuss Civic Affairs assignment
Features and Interviews, Soundbites, discussion,
sign up for Interview schedule
News story story #4 -- written in class – no makeups.

Week 6
Oct. 14 M  Mid Term Exam (Blue Book – Subjective & Objective, plus research Based Questions).
Civic Affairs assignment due at the beginning of class
Part II  Introduction to radio (audio) formats & assignments

Week 7  
Oct. 21  M  3 person newscasts. videotaped (2 groups=6 students  
Pronunciation Guide  
Introduction to radio (audio) & formats (ch. 11)  
Assign coverage of University events for #9 and #10 to cover two  
University events. Instructor to give details  
Weather & Natural phenomenon (ch. 18 p. 206 --)  
News story #5 – in class written assignment – no makeups  

Week 8  
Oct. 28 M  8 students conduct 6-7 min. Interviews with guests in class OR  
Tape a 3 min. feature solo standup. .  
Writing in radio (audio) formats / Environmental Reporting (p. 239)  
**Bring sports copy to next class for radio/audio writing assignment (ch. 28)

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

Week 9  
Nov 4  M  8 students conduct 6-7 min. Interviews with guests in class OR  
Tape a 3 min. feature solo standup.  
Writing on sports events  Begin news story #6 - due Thursday  
Introduction to Fine Arts assignment

Week 10  
Nov.11 M  8 students conduct 6-7 min. Interview with guest OR tape a 3 minute  
Feature solo standup  
Introduction to on-line writing (ch. 14, 16). Look at various formats &  
Websites  
Bring some health news

Week 11  
Nov 18 M  NUECES COUNTY SAFE COMMUNITIES COALTION presentation  
Look at differences between newspaper websites and radio/television websites  
last day to turn in University news stories #9 and # 10 .  
Assign : Take home Exam (Final Exam Section A – Internet based)
Week 12
Nov 25 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
Fine Arts assignment due at the beginning of class.
News story #7 in class

Week 13
Dec. 2 M Writing for the Internet & Social Media (ch. 15-16)
Discussion on Social Media impact

Week 14
Dec 9 News story #8 on convergence

Week 15
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

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: times for the Pronunciation Oral exam will be scheduled for 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. Check Internships.com for journalism internships
5. See Assignment Handout for dress code for outside assignments and videotaped presentations in class.

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“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
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

Civic Affairs ___ / 50
Interview ___ / 50 (or solo)
Fine Arts ___ / 50

EXAMS (25%)

Oral Exam _________ 30 pts
Mid term Exam _________ 100 pts
Final Exam _________ 100 pts (Section A & Section B)

ASSIGNMENTS (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 submits the article to the IW. (one-time only) after Instructor reads and proofreads the copy. The deadline to submit is November 1, 2013.