COMM-3312_001 NEWSWRITING FOR TELEVISION, RADIO & INTERNET  Fall, 2014

Bay Hall, 104  
Tue-Thur 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m

Ruth Aipperspach, Instructor  
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OFFICE HOURS: or by appointment  
Monday  4:30 p.m. to 5:30 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:  

1 pencil or pen with eraser  
1 reporter notebook for news reporting  
writing paper for in-class lectures/news copy, etc.;  
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, 4 Twitter messages, and a 500 word article to submit to ISLAND WAVES newspaper.

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. These are regular class days. All schedules will be adhered to.

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, students will write an in-class draft of news copy, then students will type the copy in proper format using 14 pt. fond, double spaced. Submit the typed copy in your folder for a grade.
   Due: T-R class: on or before Thursday 2 p.m. 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.
   will be adhered to.
6. (a) To avoid distractions in the classroom at all times, please turn off cell phones, 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.
   ***Cell phones may be used for researching information and/or timing news copy.length.
(c) Anyone using a Laptop or Tablet must sit near the front row to avoid distractions. Laptops and Tablets 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. Refrain from using e-cigarettes or other tobacco products in class.
9. 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 APPEALS PROCESS:
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

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
Aug 28  R  Introduction: Writing/Working in News Media (ch. 1)
What is News? (ch. 2)
Introduce Civic Affairs assignment

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

Sept. 4  R  Introduction to television (ch. 12-13) & video formats
Sign up for newscast groups
News story #1 in class – no draft or makeups

Week 3
Sept. 9  Tu  Attributions / quotations (.p. 233…)
Begin News story #2 in class – due Thursday

Sept. 11  R  Pronunciation Guide
Sentence leads and endings (ch. 6-7) & look at formatted copy

Week 4
Sept 16  Tu  3-student newscasts, videotaped (3 groups = 9 students)
Pronunciation

18  R  Editing, assignments. Discuss Civic Affairs assignment
Stories (ch. 8) Crime (ch. 20)
Begin News story #3 in class - due Tuesday

Week 5
Sept.23  Tu  3-student newscasts, videotaped (3 groups = 9 students)
Soundbites (ch. 10, pp. 160--)
Pronunciation. Format for Civic Affairs assignment

25  R  3-student newscasts, videotaped (2 groups = 6 students)
Features and interviews (ch. 10) Signup
News story #4
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Week 6
Sept. 30 Tu  Finalize preparations for Interviews & Solo features
Pronunciation Guide
News story #5 (with slide) to be done in class – no draft or makeups

Oct 2  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 7  Tu  Introduction to Radio (audio) formats (ch. 11)
Instructor to detail coverage of University events for news stories # 9 and # 10.
Weather & Natural phenomenon (ch. 18 p. 206--)
News story #6 to be done in class - no draft or makeups

9  R  Tape a 3 min. feature solo standup (8 students)
Pronunciation.

Week 8
Oct. 14  Tu  Radio newswriting: Environmental Reporting (p. 239)

16  R  Tape a 3 min. feature solo standup (8 students)
Practice newswriting in radio formats (voicer report)
Pronunciation Guide

Week 9
Oct 21  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, p.212)
Look at various web sites, and their construction & news formats
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(R Aipperspach)

Week 10
Oct 28  Tu  NUECES COUNTY SAFE COMMUNITIES COALITION
           Presentation (guest speaker)
           Discussion and in-class assignment
           Introduction to Fine Arts / or Sports assignment

30  R  Tape a 3 min feature solo standup (8 students)
      Work on re-writing headlines and sub-heading (60 spaces)

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

Week 11
Nov. 4  Tu  Introduction to online reporting (ch. 14,16) & assignment

Nov 6  R  Students to bring selected copy for online writing (ch. 14, 16)
      News story #7

Week 12
Nov. 11 Tu  Last day to turn in University news stories, #9, #10
           Note differences between newspaper websites, and radio/television sites

13  R  Ethics and the RTNDA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (ch. 22)
      www.broadcastinglawblog.com as well as current examples and concerns

Nov 18 Tu  on-line writing assignments. (ch. 14, 16)
           Look at various formats and websites

20  R  Writing for the Internet—in-class assignments

Week 14
Nov 25 Tu  Fine Arts / or Sports assignment due at the beginning of class.
           Writing for the Internet & Social Media (ch. 15-16)

27  R  THANKSGIVING DAY – no class
Week 14
Dec 2 Tu  Writing for the Internet & Social Media (ch. 15-16)
Discussion on Social Media impact
News story # 8 on convergence done in- class - no make-ups

Week 15
Dec 4 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 final exam will be given in advance of the Final Exam date and time
As scheduled on the TAMUCC Final Exam Schedule. Please schedule
your travel plans including domestic and/or international flights after
the examination time. No exceptions.

Grades:
8 news stories, outside assignments, + 2 University events 50%
Oral Exam, mid term, and Final Exam 25%
Newscast, solo, 4 Twitter messages, Island Waves article 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.

The 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 Internships.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 taped in-class newscasts and solo feature reports.

“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
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
Solo ____ / 50
Fine Arts or Sports ____ / 50

EXAMS (25 %)

Oral exam _______ 30 pts
Mid term Exam _______ 100 pts
Final Exam _______ 100 pts

ASSIGNMENT S (25 %)

Newscast _______ / 50 pts
4 Twitter Messages (5 pts each) _______ / 20 pts
Article submitted to ISLAND WAVES _______ / 30 pts

--- Credit of 30 pts given for ISLAND WAVES news story factored in when the student completes and submits the assignment between October 1, 2014 and November 10, 2014. (one Article only for credit)
Article must be proofread and approved by the Instructor first.
Twitter Assignment

Students will send 4 tweets this semester to fulfill requirements for this course. Each tweet will consist of some news story to fit 135-140 spaces.

To set up a Twitter account for newcomers:
1. go to Twitter.com, sign up and then select 10 items from the Twitter list to follow. This is part of the sign up process.
2. In Week 2, send me a tweet with “this is a test” message plus your name.
3. Send one tweet in September, October, November; and December’s tweet by the final exam time to:

RAipperspach@writecomNews

Make sure that this twitter address is used only by students in COMM 3312.001 NEWSWRITING FOR TELEVISION, RADIO AND THE INTERNET for this assignment. It is not to be used for general questions on other assignments in this class. Use Instructor email ruth.aipperspach@tamucc.edu for any questions you have.