COMM-3312_002  NEWSWRITING FOR TELEVISION, RADIO & INTERNET.  Fall, 2014

OCNR 241
Monday 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Ruth Aipperspach, Instructor
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OFFICE HOURS:
Mondays                4:30 p.m to 5:30 p.m. . . or by appointment
Tuesdays               12:45 p.m to 1:45 p.m.
Wednesdays             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 note taking, etc.;
1 Folder with pockets with name on front.  (This will become your portfolio)
1 flashdrive
access to a Dictionary

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.
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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; 3 outside assignments, 4 Twitter messages, and a 500 word article (either news or feature 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. font, doublespaced, print out copy and submit at the end of class, in your folder 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, 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 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 COMPUTER LAB DURING CLASS.
8. Refrain from usage of e-cigarettes or other tobacco products during 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 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 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.tamu.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  
Sept 8 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. 15 M  Phrases and Phrasing, & Editing (ch. 5)  
Sentence leads and endings (ch. 6-7) & assignments  
Introduction to video formats (ch. 12-13)  
Introduce 3-person newscast & requirements  
Pronunciation Guide  
News story #1 in class (no makeups)

Week 3  
Sept. 22 M  Pronunciation Guide  
Introduce 3-person newscast and requirements  
Attributions/quotations (p. 233--)  
Students sign up for newscast group  
News story #2 - in class (no makeups)

Week 4  
Sept. 29 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 – in class (no makeups)

Week 5  
Oct. 6 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. 13 M  Mid Term Exam – 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. 20 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. 27 M   **Tape a 3 min. feature solo standup. (8 students) .
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 3 M   **Tape a 3 min. feature solo standup (8 students)
Writing on sports events  **Begin news story #6 - in class
Introduction to Fine Arts  or Sports assignment

Week 10
Nov.10 M   **Tape a 3 minute feature solo standup  (8 students)
Introduction to on-line writing  (ch. 14, 16). Look at various formats &
Websites
Bring some health news

Week 11
Nov 17 M   **NUECES COUNTY SAFE COMMUNITIES COALITION presentation
Look at differences between newspaper websites and radio/television websites
**last day to turn in University news stories #9 and # 10 .
News story #7 in class
Week 12
Nov 24  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 #8 on convergence - in class

Week 13
Dec. 1  M    Writing for the Internet & Social Media (ch. 15-16)
Discussion on Social Media impact (text pp. 174-178)

Week 15
Dec. 8  M    FINAL EXAM   (7:15 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.)

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 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 broadcast internships, internships with sports journalism, and
   A host of other internship categories.
5. See Assignment Handout for dress code for outside assignments and taped 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
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

ASSIGNMENTS (25 %)

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

--- Credit of 30 pts 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:

RAiipperspach@writecomNews

Make sure that this twitter address is used only by students in COMM 3312.002 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.