COMM-3312_002  NEWSWRITING FOR TELEVISION, RADIO & INTERNET.  Fall, 2015

OCNR 241
Monday 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Ruth Aipperspach, Instructor
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OFFICE HOURS:
Mondays        4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.          or by appointment
Tuesdays       3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.
Wednesday      3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Thursday       3:15 p.m. to 4:15 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 how to select, and write copy for a newscast in appropriate formats.  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.  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, and libel/slander issues.

All students will write and complete 8 in-class news writing assignments, two university-related news stories; 3 outside assignments, a Weathercast and send 4 Tweets.
EXTRA CREDIT a 500 word article (either news, feature or sports 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 count as one absence. Assignments from unexcused absences cannot be made up.

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 as well as discussing examples from local, national, cable newscasts, and Internet news sites.
2. Students will write in-class drafts of news copy, typed in proper format, double-spaced using 14 pt. font, Times Roman. Then print out copy and submit in a folder at the end of class; 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 please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices 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 any oral/written assignments, that student will incur a three point deduction of his/her final grade.
(b) Don’t leave the classroom to make or answer a call.
NO TEXTING messages during class time.

***Cell phones may be used for researching information and/or timing length of news copy
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.

During mid-term, final exams and all writing and taped assignments, turn off all electronic devices, and put them out of sight. If any student uses a cell phone or other electronic devices 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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.
Disabilities Accommodations:
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

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

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 fill 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”.this term.

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.

Statement of Academic Continuity
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e. emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

FYI: All students are encouraged to sign up for an Islander email account. Islander email is critical for University communication in any weather related situations or other emergencies. Students may contact the Instructor by Islander email, phone, or visit in my office in Bay Hall, 222-B
Part I: Television (video) formats and related assignments

Week 1
Aug 31 M Introduction: Writing/Working in News Media (ch. 1)
What is News? (ch. 2)
Introduction to Pronunciation Guide
Introduce Civic Affairs assignment

Sept 7 M Labor Day -- no class

Week 2
Sept. 14 M Phrases, Phrasing, & Editing (ch. 5)
Sentence leads and endings (ch. 6-7)
Introduction to video formats (ch. 12-13)
Introduce 3-person newscast & requirements & sign up
Pronunciation Guide
News story #1 in class (no makeups)

Week 3
Sept. 21 M Attributions/quotations (p 233--)
Pronunciation Guide
News story #2 - in class (no makeups)

Week 4
Sept. 28 M 3-person newscasts, taped (3 groups = 9 students)
Pronunciation,
Stories (ch. 8) Crime (ch. 20),
Features and Interviews, Soundbites, (ch. 10,)
News story #3 – in class (no makeups)

Week 5
Oct. 5 M 3-person newscasts, taped (3 groups = 9 students)
Pronunciation guide
Discuss Civic Affairs assignment
Soundbites, discussion, (ch. 10 p. 160)
sign up for Solo (audio) presentation schedule
News story story #4 -- in class – no makeups.

Week 6
Oct. 12 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. 19 M  3 person newscasts. taped  (2 groups = 6 students)
Pronunciation Guide
Introduction to radio (audio) & formats  (ch. 11)
Assign coverage of University events for #9 and #10 . Instructor to give details
Weather & Natural phenomenon  (ch . 18 p. 206 --)
News story #5 – in class assignment

Week 8
Oct. 26 M  Tape a 2- 2-1/2 feature solo standup with Announcer.  (half the class) .
Writing in radio (audio) formats / Environmental Reporting (p. 239)
**Bring sports copy to next class for radio/audio discussion  (ch. 28)
Introduction to Fine Arts or Sports assignment
News story #6

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

Week 9
Nov 2 M  Tape a 2-2-1/2. feature solo standup with Announcer  (half the class)
Discussion & writing guidelines on sports events
Introduction to Weathercast presentation & sign up

Week 10
Nov.9 M  Weathercast presentation  (half the class)
Introduction to on-line writing  (ch. 14, 16). Look at various formats &
Websites
Bring some health news for next class

Week 11
Nov 16 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 .
News story #7 in class – health news
Week 12
Nov 23  M  Weathercast presentation (half the class)
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 / Sports assignment due at the beginning of class.

Week 13
Nov. 30 M
Writing for the Internet & Social Media (ch. 15-16); convergence p. 186
Discussion on Social Media impact (text pp. 174-178)
News story #8

Week 15
Dec. 7  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. 3 Outside assignments + 2 University events  50%
Oral exam, mid term and final exam  25%
Newscast, Solo, 4 Tweets, Weathercast  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.

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.
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

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Twitter Assignment

@writecomNews

Students will send 4 tweets this semester to the Instructor to fulfill requirements for this course. Each tweet will consist of an abbreviated news story and source to fit 135-140 spaces.

To set up a Twitter account for newcomers:
1. Go to Twitter.com, sign up and select 10 items from the Twitter list for you to follow. This is part of the sign up process.
2. In Week 2, send the Instructor a tweet with “this is a test” plus give your name
3. Send one tweet in September, October, November, and December’s tweet by the last class meeting.

Make sure that the 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@tamuicc.edu for any questions relation to assignments.
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  
Solo ___ / 50  
Announcer ___ / 5  
Fine Arts ___ / 50 (or Sports)  

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  
Weathercast presentation ________ / 30 pts  

*** Extra credit of 30 pts for ISLAND WAVES news story factored in when the student writes and submits the assignment between October 1, 2015 and November 10, 2015.
(one Article only for extra credit)  Article must be proofread and approved by the Instructor first.