MEDIA WRITING

Course Description:

This course will introduce the student to various types of writing professionals do for a wide range of media platforms: newswriting for print media, reporting for broadcast media—radio, television—and for digital media, online, visual journalism, public relations and advertising. The course will cover basic elements of journalistic writing, thinking like a journalist, covering speeches, meetings and writing good, catchy leads. Emphasis will be on the written word as a form of communicating substance.

Learning Objectives/Goals:

Accordingly, the goals of this course include the following:

1) To understand the basic principles of media writing across platforms
2) To distinguish various styles of media writing for different media
3) To help student determine and practice story selection, deadline pressures and journalistic integrity

Student Learning Outcomes:

1) By the end of the term, the student will be able to recognize the basic elements of good writing for the media, write basic stories for print and broadcast media and for public relations and advertising platforms.
2) Student will also learn journalism of high integrity, be able to distinguish between false news and real news and be able to recognize and interpret media ethics, libel/slander that affect media writing.

Textbook and Readings:


Course materials needed:

1 pencil or pen with eraser
1 Reporter’s Notebook for newswriting
1 flash drive
Access to a Dictionary

MEDIA 2311. 001 Fall 2018

Course meets: 11:00 am to 12:15 pm TR in CCH 209

My Office Hours: MTW 9 to 10:30 am (or by appt.)

Office: Bay Hall 334

Professor: Dr. Anantha S. Babbili

Aug. 27 to Dec. 5, 2018

Phone: 361-825-2678; C 361.563.5177

E-Mail: anantha.babbili@tamucc.edu
Major Course Requirements and Expectations:

Your performance in class and learning are assessed based on: 1) Attendance/Participation, 2) Weekly Writing Assignments; and 3) Final Written Report on a News Story

Attendance/Participation: Because this course will rely a great deal on in-class writing, your attendance and thoughtful participation is very important. You should come to class well-acquainted with the assigned readings and be practice them. Perfect attendance is expected. Three unexcused absences will lower your grade by one letter grade.

Thus, your final grade will be determined on the following weightings:

- Weekly written assignments: 60%
- Final Written Report: 30%
- Attendance/Participation: 10%  
  Total possible grade: 100%

Grading Scale: 90-100%=A (Excellent); 80-89%=B (Very Good); 70-79%=C (Average); 60-69%=D (Below Average); 59%-below= F (Failure)

Required Readings:

Weekly assigned readings from the required textbook --and related material distributed in class with the expectation that you will complete the assigned readings prior to each class in which the material is discussed and debated.

Course Policies:

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 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 for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

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.

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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. 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.

Grade Appeals

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at:
http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or
guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean's office in the college in which the course is taught.
For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website,
http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

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 behavior that interferes with either
(a) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional progr
am 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.

Statement of Civility

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to
provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the
University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and
courteous
to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on
the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

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
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 the grade of F.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

Definition: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-
knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation of academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to
understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example),
because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style. When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/, and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

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.

Attendance and Tardiness: Attendance is required—both physically and mentally. You are expected to take an active role in classroom discussions. Absences, late arrivals, and chronic failure to engage in class discussion will all be reflected in your participation grade.

Late work and make-up exams

- If there should be a legitimate reason for you missing class (illness, family emergencies, certain University-sponsored extracurricular activities), please provide the instructor with the notification prior to the event or as soon as you are able—before the missed class period. If appropriate, we can arrange alternate times for you to make up quizzes or exams, but it will be your responsibility to get any information from lecture from one of your classmates.
- Unexcused absences will be noted and reflected in your participation grade. Also, any work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.
- Late work for any reason considered unexcused will be panelized by at least one letter grade for each day it is late, as noted earlier.

Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage: While in class, please make sure your phone is off or on silent (and in your backpack or out of sight), so it’s not heard in class.

- No multitasking during class time [no laptops, texting or private conversations]
- Please remember to check your email regularly for any course updates.
- If you would like to discuss any course readings, lectures, or assignments outside of class, you should feel free to contact me via email or by arranging to visit me during office hours or set up an appointment to see me at any other time.
- Please submit hard copies of your papers, prior to the class period on the due date. Marked copies will be returned to you.
- All writing for this course must be composed using a standard, 12-point font size, and with the standard 1-inch margins.

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COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS ON NEXT PAGE
MEDA 2311: Course Schedule and Assignments

(Textbook and additional readings will be assigned in class each week. The schedule is subject to change)

Aug. 28-30: Introduction to the Course (Weekly Writing Assignments in Class)
Tools for Journalistic Integrity and its Ethical Foundations

Sept. 3-5: What is News? What is Media Writing?
Journalism Today and Forms of Writing

Sept. 11-13: Characteristics of Media Writing
Hard News and Soft News

Sept. 18-20 Newswriting Styles
Language of News

Sept. 25-27 Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Principles
Writing with integrity

Oct. 2-4 Basic Lead writing
Guidelines for effective writing

Oct. 9-11 Body of the Story
Quotations and Attributions

Oct. 16-18 Interviewing Techniques
Art of Listening

Oct. 23-25 Digital Online Journalism
Types of Cyberspace Writing

Oct. 30-Nov. 1 Writing for Public Relations

Nov. 6-8 Advertising Copywriting

Nov. 13-15 Speeches and Meetings

Nov. 20-22 Feature stories

Nov. 27-Dec. 4 Investigative writing

Final Reports

FINAL WRITTEN REPORT DUE IN LAST CLASS PERIOD