You’ve made it through Media Writing (congratulations!) so you know news values and basic story telling. In this class we’re going to go deeper into the mechanics of reporting by writing more advanced stories for publication. Among other stories, we will focus on two themes: Immigration and an Election Guide. The first half of the class we will be interviewing sources and reporting on a variety of immigration-related topics and people in order to create the first Immigration report for the Coastal Bend. This publication will be designed in the editing and layout class.

The second half of the class will focus on electoral issues, candidates and voters to produce a comprehensive Voter Guide for students at TAMUCC for the upcoming 2020 election. Again, this will be designed as a publication in the editing and layout class.

For both publications you will use investigative reporting, data-driven stories, features, and other news writing techniques to tell a broad range of stories designed to make you and readers experts.

Course Objectives

By the end of this class, you will be able to:

- Write compelling and well-researched professional level news stories.
- Interview and include diverse voices for a comprehensive view of a key issue in the community
- Use a variety of journalistic techniques to tell a comprehensive story
- Work in a collaborative news environment
- Produce two publications as a group and in conjunction with another class.
- Understanding what makes for authentic and successful public relations content.

Required text: 2019 Associated Press Stylebook. Always bring this with you. There is also an online/app version.
Readings

We will be discussing the news in class. This is part of the participation grade. You’ll also read and analyze selections to use as a model for your work. Here’s what you should read so we can have a common frame of reference for discussions and quizzes. And please don’t limit yourself to this list. You should always read/listen/watch all the news you can.

Local news, including the Caller Times and Island Waves, TV and radio, including the local stations, and PBS.


Class readings. I will post additional class readings on Blackboard.

Course assignments and grading:

More details regarding specific assignments will be given in class and on Blackboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due*</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class labs (12)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brief</td>
<td>Jan. 24</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 1</td>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 1 revision</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story 2</td>
<td>Feb. 21</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story 2 revision</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story 3</td>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story 3 revision</td>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story 4</td>
<td>April 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story 4 revision</td>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infographic</td>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP style quizzes</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dates for the quizzes, reflections and presentations will be posted on the course website as the semester unfolds. Because journalism depends upon real-world events, which may change times, story dates may change at the instructor’s discretion.

Note: All four stories must have one visual/multimedia element from the following: 1-2 photos or infographic.

All assignments must be turned in on a Word doc, 12 point, double spaced, Times New Roman. Word counts vary by story and will be specified on the assignment on Blackboard.

Course grading

Grading for this course will be based on these percentages:

A: 90-100
B: 80-89
C: 70-79
MEDA-2315 syllabus

D: 60-69
F: Below 60
All stories are based on deadline-style requirements. Missing a deadline in news work is unacceptable. **A late assignment will lose points automatically**, so get it in early.

Course attendance and class policies

This is a hands-on course that requires faithful attendance and your full attention. Because deadline writing and constructive feedback are essential to your growth as a journalist, it is critical that you attend class. Unexcused class absences will result in lower engagement points and missed in-class assignments for unexcused absences cannot be made up.

Here, as in the professional world, good communication is key. If you know you’re going to be absent, please let me know as soon as possible—and before class. If you are having trouble with an element of this class, I can’t help unless I know what’s going on.

Credibility is everything in journalism. This is an introductory class, so you'll have some time to get used to being 100 percent accurate. Starting at the beginning of Week Six, a major fact error such as the misspelling of the subject’s name, the incorrect outcome of an event or a misidentification of a major figure in the story or exercise will result in an F for the assignment. Minor factual errors and earlier major errors will be penalized less harshly.

**Laptop and phone use**: During class discussions, there should be no laptops or cell phones out. During our writing labs and in-class exercises, then laptops and phones are allowed. Research has shown that taking notes by hand yields better cognition and memorization of ideas, concepts and practices. Therefore, laptops are allowed only when it is time to write or take quizzes.

Class Schedule

**Week 1: Jan. 22**
Introduction and immigration publication planning
Taking basic journalism to the next level

**Week 2: Jan. 29**
Working with sources

**Week 3: Feb. 5**
Features

**Week 4: Feb. 12**
Data journalism

**Week 5: Feb. 19**
Investigative journalism
Week 6: Feb. 26
Public records, FOIA, and sunshine laws

Week 7: March 4
Community journalism

Week 8: March 11
Spring break

Week 9: March 18
Working as a team

Week 10: March 25
Voter guide planning

Week 11: April 1
Make it local

Week 12: April 8
Visualizing your story: photos and infographics

Week 13: April 15
Finalizing the stories

Week 14: April 22
Final issues for publication

Week 15: April 29
Industry challenges/career issues/internships

May 8, 11-14
Finals
Final Grades due May 19

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.
MEDA-2315 syllabus

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.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf.

**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.

**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 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 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.