Media Writing/Editing

JRSM 7000-M50

Fall 2021

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Basic instruction in journalistic forms and AP style; reporting, writing and editing news stories; media literacy.

Prerequisites

None

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Required

Tim Harrower, *"Inside Reporting"* 3rd ed. (McGraw Hill, 2010) ISBN 978-0-07- 337891-6

(You may purchase this book, but the required chapters will be posted in eCourseware.)

"The Associated Press Stylebook 2020" ISBN 154-164-7572 (or 2019 edition).

The New York Times is available through the University of Memphis McWherter Library. Access the link here.

A number of other publications also are available to students free of charge. Access link here for passwords.

Classroom format

Media writing is a reporting and writing course. Consequently, students write every week and receive regular feedback and coaching on their work. Additionally, 7000 M50 is an asynchronous remote course. Each week, course content will open Monday at 6 a.m. Discussion posts are due by Thursday at midnight, and all other assignments are due by Sunday at midnight.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: http://elearn.memphis.edu
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the term year course list available to you, click on the link for JRSM 7000-M50 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page.
4. **Please do not use the internal eCourseware email system on the course web page**. Use your regular University of Memphis email to correspond with me at padenney@memphis.edu.

Course Requirements

During the semester, each student completes news and news feature stories and an in-depth final story project. Rewrites for outside stories may be required. Rewrites must include the additional reporting discussed in story editing notes to receive additional credit.

Assignments must have a story slug (one or two-word description of the story), date and byline (your name) and be filed in a word document that is double spaced with indented paragraphs in 11 pt. Verdana type. Do not put extra space between paragraphs.

Additionally, professors grade story assignments in track changes — the editing component of Word — to encourage effective feedback and learning. All students are responsible for learning how to use track changes, as well as how to navigate course materials on eCourseware. You can find tutorials on eCourseware in the "Getting Started" link for this class.

Media writing/editing requires knowledge of Associated Press style. Therefore, students write all assignments in correct AP style and complete quizzes on basic AP style during the semester. Students also will prepare a PowerPoint presentation on a specific chapter of the AP Stylebook.

Students are required to have an online site to showcase their work, along with a resume, about me page and contact information. Assignments for this class should be posted are rewrites are returned.

And finally, students must stay informed about the news. They should, at a minimum, read a local and national newspaper every day. Simply put, in order to learn how to write the news, you must read the news.

Grading

Lab/homework/portfolios: 15 percent
Story assignments: 70 percent
Final project: 15 percent

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4%
B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4%
C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4%
D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4%
F 0-59.4%

Other issues

Media writing is a practical, hands-on course that teaches you to think and write as media professionals. Meeting deadlines is essential for media professionals, so story deadlines are firm.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: Computers and network access can be finicky. However, tech problems are not an acceptable reason for missing deadlines. As a University of Memphis student, you are entitled to help from the IT helpdesk. It is in your best interests to call as soon as you are aware of the problem. There are two ways to access the University of Memphis IT helpdesk: Call 901-678-8888, or log in to the website (umhelpdesk.memphis.edu) to open a service ticket.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a basic schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Other assignments are explained on eCourseware. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced in class or on the news notices found on the opening page of the class eCourseware.

Week 1 Aug. 23-29: Course Introduction
Media Writing Basics: What is news? Accuracy, balance, news values and media lingo.
Review week 1 lecture and complete assignments.
Read chapter 2 plus pages 88-91 (Harrower).

Week 2 Aug. 30-Sept 5: News summary leads and the inverted pyramid.
Review week 2 lecture and complete assignments.
Read chapters 3 and 4. (Harrower) Specific pages to re-read are noted below.
Take chapter 2 quizzes.
News story due.

Week 3 Sept 6-12: More news summary leads, mini stories and AP style.
Sept. 6: School holiday for Labor Day.
Review week 3 lecture and complete assignments.
Read chapter 3, pages 56-63 (Harrower).
Take chapter 3 quizzes.
Optional: News story rewrite due.

Week 4 Sept. 13-19: Quotes and attribution
Read chapter 4, pages 82-85 (Harrower).
Review week 4 lecture and complete assignments.
Event story due.

Week 5 Sept. 20-26: Story structure and nut graphs
Review week 5 lecture and complete assignments.
Take AP Quiz No. 1 (addresses).
AP style presentation due.

Week 6 Sept. 27-Oct. 3: Covering press conferences
Review week 6 lecture and complete assignments.
Read chapter 3, pages 48-51 (Harrower).
Press conference story due.

Week 7 Oct. 4-10: Interviewing
Fall Break: Oct. 9-12
Review week 7 lecture and complete assignments.
Take AP Quiz No. 2 (numbers).

Week 8 Oct. 11-17: Personality profiles
Review week 8 lecture and complete assignments.
Read chapter 4, pages 70-81 (Harrower).
Chapter 4 quizzes due.
Personality profile due.

Week 9 Oct. 18-24: Sources
Review week 9 lecture and complete assignments.
Take AP Quiz No. 3 (Money, time and dates).

Week 10 Oct. 25-31: Rewriting, headlines and hyperlinks
Review week 10 lecture and complete assignments.
Take AP Quiz No. 4 (Titles and capitalization).
Personality rewrite due.

Week 11 Nov. 1-7: In-depth news stories
Review week 11 lecture and complete assignments.
Read chapter 3, pages 52-63 (Harrower).
In-depth news story due.

Week 12 Nov. 8-14: In-depth news stories
Review week 12 lecture and complete assignments.

Week 13 Nov. 15-21: Portfolios
Review week 13 lecture and complete assignments.
Take AP Quiz No. 5 (Mixed AP style).
In-depth news story rewrite due.

Week 14 Nov. 22-28: Portfolio review
Review week 14 lecture and complete assignments.

Week 15: Final portfolios due Dec. 5 at midnight.

Study day: Dec. 2   Final exams: Dec. 3-9

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement
All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or SquareSpace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:
- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email
Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the http://iam.memphis.edu website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices
Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance
Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition
Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. *(Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018)*

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

Weather policy

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the University is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

Student support

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

COVID-19 protocols for this course

Student Health

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@memphis.edu or 901.678.2187.

Student Resources

Students who need additional resources can visit the Dean of Students Office website at https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php.