

CCJN 2312 -- REPORTING 1, SPRING 2011  
Section 801: 10-10:50 MWF, ULee 283, Section 802: 11-11:50 MWF, ULee 283  
Combined Lab: 1-2:20 W, ULee 283  
Instructor: Carolyn Barta  
Office: ULee 205  
Office hours: noon-1 MWF, 2:30-3:30 T-Th, and by appointment  
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**Required Textbooks/Materials:**

*Writing and Reporting News, A Coaching Method* by Carole Rich (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
Associated Press Stylebook (2010 or 2009)  
Additional readings will be assigned. Students should follow current events in local/campus news and stay abreast of national news via news websites/TV news

Recommended: Reporter's notebook, a digital or tape recorder or cell phone with audio recording capability.

**Course Overview:** This course introduces students to professional, responsible and ethical reporting. You will hone your news judgment and learn to report, organize and write news stories that are concise, accurate and fair and work on deadline. These core reporting and writing skills, even in a changing media landscape, remain the bedrock professional standards for newspapers, TV and radio news, websites, magazines, public relations firms and corporate communication.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Develop an appreciation for news, stimulated by daily consumption of news on different platforms – print, online and broadcast.
2. Report news accurately and fairly, learning how to properly source and balance a story, provide essential story elements and follow strong ethical guidelines.
3. Conduct news interviews in a productive and professional manner and perform research as needed
4. Develop proficiency in covering feature stories, events, speeches, meetings, and breaking news on deadline
5. Write basic news and feature stories clearly and succinctly, utilizing effective leads and organization, correctly attributing information and using quotes
6. Demonstrate proficiency in grammar, spelling, punctuation and AP style
7. Learn to recognize news and generate story ideas.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:** This is a rigorous course with many assignments/requirements. Students cannot get behind. Grade components include:

• **Five out-of-class stories -- 55 percent:**

**Story 1 Choice story (advance, profile, feature) (10 percent), 600-700 words**

**Story 2 Campus Event (10 percent), 600 words**

**Story 3 Speech (10 percent), 600 words**

**Story 4 Meeting (10 percent). 500-600 words**

**Story 5 Final story, Feature (15 percent), 750-850 words. Research and added value element required: graphic, photos, links, etc.**

- **Lab/class exercises: 20 percent**
- **Quizzes (AP style, readings) – 10 percent**
- **What's in the News? Blogs, and aggregating news – 5 percent**
- **Participation/attendance – 10 percent, includes publication, attendance, attention in class, participation in class discussion**

**1. STORIES:** An assignment sheet for major stories will be posted on Blackboard with deadlines. Stories will be graded on reporting and writing. Instructor must approve all story ideas. Stories must be local, either on campus or in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

**Reporting:** You are expected to do original reporting -- interviewing people, attending events and recording what you see and hear. Standards for reporting include accuracy, adequate newsgathering, appropriate sources, use of quotes and attribution.

**Writing:** Writing standards include effective leads, nut graphs, organization, clarity, objectivity, and use of correct AP style, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**Ethics:** Don't cover a story on any activity in which you are involved, which could create a conflict of interest. Do not use people close to you as sources.

#### **Rules on Sources**

- Three or more local, human sources are required. Grading will include whether you have gotten the right kind of sources. Do not rely on journalism faculty or other journalism students as sources.
- Internet sites may be used to provide background and facts but avoid using quotes found on the Internet. If information or quotes are taken from a website, proper attribution is required.
- Attribute any quote taken from another publication or broadcast.
- Friends, colleagues and family members are NOT acceptable sources.
- Anonymous sources are used ONLY with instructor's approval.
- Primary interviews should be in person or by phone. Use e-mail interviews to set up interviews, follow up, fill holes or check facts. Use e-mail for main interviews only if that's the sole way you can get the interview.
- A **Source List** for all interviews must be attached to each story. The Source List should contain five elements: **name of source, identification of source, contact info (phone number or e-mail address), date of interview, type of interview (in person, phone, e-mail)**. Failure to provide contact info for sources may result in a 10-point deduction on stories. Instructor may contact sources to verify information in your stories.
- Always tell your sources that the story you are reporting could be published or aired. All major stories should be for public consumption and NOT pitched to sources as only a classroom exercise.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism, fabrication and resubmission or double submission of work performed for another class are all acts of academic dishonesty. DO NOT lift quotes from the DMN or DC, another publication or website and use as if you obtained them. DO NOT make up quotes. DO NOT take general information or paraphrased information and turn them into quotes. DO NOT shift a quote from one person to another. DO NOT submit someone else's work as your own. DO NOT claim a source you didn't actually get. DO NOT repackage a story from another class or that has previously been reported/written for any reason other than specifically for this course. Violations will result in an F on the assignment. Grievous Honor Code violations may result in failure of the course or referral to the university's Honor Council.

**Late Stories:** Late assignments will be penalized 10-20 points, unless you've made advance arrangements with the instructor and obtained an extension. Stories that are more than one week late without an extension are subject to F.

**Story format:**

- At the top of first page: Your name, type of story (i.e. speech story, event story, etc.), slug, and word count.
- A headline goes immediately before the story
- Copy should be double-spaced, with normal margins, and stapled.
- Source List follows the story.
- Online or printed source material should be listed or attached: news releases, brochures, reports, minutes, agendas, published articles or links.
- Interview notes should be attached or notations made of recorded interviews, with tape/digital recording available to instructor, if requested. Stories without notes or adequate backup may be penalized up to 10 points.

**Reporting standards for all media projects**

**Content:** Is story fair, newsworthy, and well sourced? Is the story organized, are all questions answered, and is all relevant information properly attributed? Is the story neutral and balanced, showing differing sides of an issue? Are direct quotes preceded by strong transitions in print stories? At least five points may be taken off for such problems. For errors of fact, expect 10 or more points off.

**Mechanical standards for writing:**

Associated Press style, punctuation and grammar errors: 2 or more points

Spelling: 10 points for misspelled names or other proper nouns; 2 or more points for other spelling errors. Awkward or unclear phrasing: 2 or more points

**2. QUIZZES.** Quizzes will cover AP style and readings. AP style quizzes are scheduled and are open book. Readings quizzes may be pop or announced.

**3. LAB/CLASSWORK/HOMEWORK:** Always bring your AP stylebook and text to class and your stylebook to lab. Late class/lab work will be accepted only for excused absences and if submitted within one week of return to class. All lab/classwork and homework will be critiqued, although NOT ALL grades will be recorded.

**ATTENDANCE:** An excused absence will be considered ONLY if you provide the instructor with a form that may be downloaded from:

<http://smu.edu/healthcenter/policy/absenceclass.asp>

This form is for illness, family situation or any other issue that warrants an excused absence. Doctor's notes also are accepted. After three unexcused absences, each absence will downgrade a student's participation grade. You may be dropped for excessive absences. Two unexplained tardies will be counted as an absence. If you come in after roll is taken, it's up to you to tell the instructor that you were present.

**PUBLICATIONS:** You are required to publish one story, in the Daily Campus, Daily Mustang or other publication. A clipping, printout or script must be turned in w/ pub date. Failure to publish will take 50 points from your participation grade.

**Religious holidays, athletics, school activities:** Religiously observant students who will be absent on holidays must notify the instructor in writing at the beginning of the semester of the holiday and absence date. Athletes should provide dates of classes that

will be missed for out-of-town trips. Students with appropriate paperwork will be excused for officially sanctioned university extracurricular activity.

**Makeup Work:** An excused absence will include a verifiable illness, family emergency, religious holiday or approved school trip. It is the responsibility of the student to determine what work was missed and to make arrangements for makeups.

**SAVING YOUR WORK:** Students should save their work on CD-RW or thumb drive, or e-mail to yourself, so work may be transferred between class and lab or retrievable if an assignment is lost. Students should save graded stories, exercises and other work in a folder in case a grade dispute arises. Save copies of all published work electronically.

**STUDENT CONFERENCES:** The professor is available during office hours or by appointment for student conferences and is eager to help with stories in the lab or outside of class. Students who are experiencing problems in the course should schedule a conference with the instructor and seek extra help.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:** If you need academic accommodations for a disability, you must first contact Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities at (214) 768-4557 to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. You should also schedule an appointment with your teacher to make any necessary arrangements. A verification letter from Ms. Marin or another official is required. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)

**USING TECHNOLOGY IN CLASS:** During class, computers should be used for in-class assignments only. You may check your e-mail, Facebook or other websites before class begins. Likewise, texting or use of I-phones, Blackberries, cell phones during class is not allowed. Put your phones on mute while you're in class. Students who attempt to multi-task during class, whether using technology or trying to do homework for other classes, will be penalized on their participation grade. You will receive an "F" for class participation if you are found ignoring this policy three times.

#### **ADDITIONAL GRADING INFORMATION**

1. "A"s are rare. They are awarded only for truly excellent work. Very good work receives a "B"; average work a "C"; below average a "D." This is in accordance with university regulations.
2. All work will be judged rigorously. Letter grades are based on a 10-point scale. For example, the "B" range is as follows: 80-82 B-; 83-86 B; 87-89 B+. The same spread applies to all letter grades (except there is no A+).

1/18/11

