

# WRITING FOR MASS MEDIA

**Spring 2026**

**MCOM 2311-001 -- 9:30 to 10:50 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in WBT 136.**

- Instructor: **John "Danny" Mogle**  
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Best way to contact: **Call/text**
- **Office Hours: 10 to 11 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday or by appointment.** I welcome and encourage office visits.) I will meet with you any time I can.

## DEPARTMENT SYLLABI

Use this link to access the syllabi for all Department of Communication courses

<https://www.uttyler.edu/communication/syllabi/>

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the reporting and writing skills used to produce accurate, ethical and engaging news and strategic communication across print, digital, social, and broadcast platforms. Students practice interviewing, observation, research, analysis, and verification, with attention to ethical decision-making, grammar, AP style, and storytelling. Emphasis is placed on writing clearly and concisely, meeting professional standards, and adapting content for different platforms and audiences.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

### **Competency: Writing and Storytelling**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Write clear, concise, and accurate news and strategic communication content for multimedia platforms.
- Produce fact-based stories in appropriate professional formats when provided with a defined set of information.
- Apply grammar and Associated Press style consistently in written work.

### **Competency: Analysis and Systematic Inquiry**

- Gather, evaluate, and present information appropriate for strategic communication and multimedia journalism.
- Evaluate information to determine its newsworthiness and whether it meets professional standards of attribution and sourcing.
- Select appropriate storytelling techniques and formats to effectively reach a defined target audience.
- Analyze information to determine whether its primary purpose is to inform, persuade or sell.

#### **Competency: Legal and Ethical Principles**

- Apply legal principles governing strategic communication and multimedia journalism, including libel, plagiarism, fabrication, and media law.
- Identify and evaluate ethical issues in journalism, strategic communication, and social media contexts.
- Apply ethical standards to the reporting, writing, and presentation of information for mass media.

#### **e. Competency: Critical Evaluation**

- Evaluate information and media content for accuracy, fairness, clarity, sourcing, verification, and attribution.
- Assess print, broadcast, and public relations materials for fairness, inclusion of opinion and transparency of sources.
- Analyze the potential impacts of media messages on individuals and society.

#### **Competency: Media Literacy**

- Identify mass media platforms (e.g., print, broadcast, digital, social media, podcasts) and describe their unique characteristics.
- Demonstrate the ability to adapt messages to different platforms taking into account audience usage and preferences.
- Evaluate the strengths and limitations of media platforms for communication purposes.

#### **Competency: Media Ecology**

- Shape messages considering how print, video, and presentation elements influence audience perception.
- Adapt messages for different settings and intended uses to maximize clarity and effectiveness.

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

- **Associated Press Stylebook.** New York: Associated Press. Also available online at [apstylebook.org](http://apstylebook.org)(Links to an external site.). (No older than 2020 edition.)
- Readings and videos assigned in class and posted in Canvas. Material posted in Canvas function as a textbook.

## **RECOMMENDED MEDIA CONSUMPTION**

To build your skills and understanding, engage regularly with a variety of media, including:

- Newspapers, magazines, and online news outlets.
- Broadcast and streaming news programs, podcasts, and public radio (e.g., NPR).
- Press releases, advertising campaigns, and other strategic communication materials.
- Social media platforms, video channels, and digital content, analyzed in the context of journalism and communication principles.

Other recommendations:

- Clark, Roy Peter. (2006) *Writing Tools, 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer*.
- Strunk Jr., W., & White, E.B. *The Elements of Style* (4th Ed.), New York: Longman.

## **COURSE NOTES**

### **Basic Requirements**

- Access to a reliable computer and internet connection.
- Ability to travel off-campus for reporting and information-gathering as needed.
- The Associated Press Stylebook for reference and assignments.

### **Communication**

If you have a question, concern or just want to talk about something related to class, call or send me a text at **903-617-8196**. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

- You can also send me an email.
- Check the Announcements tab of Canvas.
- If there is any valid reason that you cannot turn in work on time, contact me.

### **Completing Work on Time**

Assignments are posted in Canvas and each has a deadline. Missing a deadline results in a deduction. Those who miss an assignment without an excused absence may not get the opportunity to make up the assignment.

### **Rights of Pregnant and Parenting Students**

As required by SB 412, SB 459, and SB 459/HB 1361, passed by the 88th Legislature in 2023, pregnant and parenting students are afforded different supports and rights. Part of the support afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty members who are informed by a student that they need this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison to receive these supports and rights. Students should contact the Parenting Student Liaison at [parents@uttyler.edu](mailto:parents@uttyler.edu) and complete the Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form.

### **Academic Honesty**

The University's academy honesty policies apply. You, and only you, must do the work that you submit. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, unattributed use of others' work (including test and paper "banks"), disruption of class, and courtesy to, or harassment of, other students or your instructor. Anyone caught cheating will earn a "0" for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit. Students caught plagiarizing will fail the assignment, may fail this class and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. Go here for more:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php> (Links to an external site.)

### **UT Tyler's Statement on AI**

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code.

Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. Refer to the About This Course section of the UT Tyler Syllabus Module for specific information on appropriate use of AI in your course(s).

### **GRADED COURSE REQUIREMENTS INFORMATION**

- **Content 41%**— Students write news stories based on information provided in class or gathered independently. Some assignments may also require photography or video components.
- **Capstone 15.5%**— Students produce a complete news package that includes a written news story, supporting photographs, and a supporting video.
- **Discussion 10.5%**— Students participate in discussions on mass communication issues and respond thoughtfully to classmates' posts.
- **Assignment 26%**— Students build skills, demonstrate knowledge based on materials covered class and assigned readings.
- **Attendance 6%**— Students begin with a score of 100; each unexcused absence results in a 5-point deduction.

\* These are an approximation. Percentages will change if course content changes.

There is no midterm test or final. Students demonstrate knowledge by doing assignments, writing stories and discussing issues.

**Information on each assignment will be provided in class and Canvas.**

Each assignment has a point value, explanation of its purpose, and description of how it will be graded. If you are unsure about any part of an assignment, contact me **before** you begin. Call or text me at 903-617-8196 with questions.

### **GRADING SCALE**

Your final grade is determined by the points you have acquired as a percentage of the total points available.

- A: 90-100%
- B: 80-89%
- C: 70-79% D: 60-69%
- F: 59% and below

Check Canvas frequently for the status of your grade. You will not be given an opportunity to do extra work to improve your grade.

### **LATE WORK AND MAKEUP ASSIGNMENTS**

Late work is penalized. When absences are approved, late work is accepted.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

You will receive a 5-pt. deduction for each time you miss class that is unexcused.

The University of Texas at Tyler recognizes many things that constitute an excused absence. For a complete list of these policies [click here. \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

### **CALENDAR**

**Census Date:** The census date for the semester is Jan. 27. This is the final date for many enrollment-related actions, including adding new courses, changing sections, or dropping courses without incurring grades of "W" or "Q". Census is also the second drop for non-payment date each academic session. See the Office of the Registrar website for additional details.

**Final exam:** There is no final exam given in this course.

**Week by Week:** Here is the week-by-week rundown of what will be covered. Sometimes circumstances require scheduling changes. Any changes will be posted in Canvas.

### **Course Materials and Assignments**

- Most units include in-class presentations and readings and videos on Canvas.
- Instructions and due dates are provided within each assignment.
- Some work will be completed during class, while others will be assigned as homework.

- Due dates will be adjusted as needed. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas.

## **Capstone**

- Capstone pitch - due Feb. 1
- Capstone social media - due April 21
- Capstone presentation - due April 22
- Capstone project final - due April 25

## **I. News Value -Jan. 13, 15**

- Is it Fake? - assignment
- Applying News Value - assignment
- A Nose for News - discussion

## **II. Professional Standards - Jan. 20, 22**

- Applying professional standards - assignment
- Analyzing a News Story - assignment
- Story Pitch - content
- Write a Story - content

## **III. Putting it Together - Jan. 27, 29**

- The 5-paragraph news challenge - content
- The 5-paragraph feature challenge - content

## **IV. Digital Platforms - Feb. 3, 5**

- Reporting on digital platforms - assignment
- The multi-media story - content
- Multimedia self-evaluation - assignment

## **V. Social Media - Feb. 10, 12**

- Social Media and the Press - discussion
- Becoming Engaged - discussion

- Social Media video - content

## **VI. Questions and Quotes - Feb. 17, 19**

- The Q&A Story - content
- Asking questions - assignment
- What would you do? - discussion

## **VII. Associated Press Style - Feb. 24, 26**

- Using the AP Stylebook - assignment
- Stylebook discoveries - discussion
- Putting AP style to use - assignment

## **VIII. The art of being clear - March 3, 5**

- Using the right/write word - assignment
- This is clear as mud - assignment
- What's missing? - assignment

## **Spring Break - March 10, 12**

## **IX. Being Concise - March 17, 19**

- Recognizing clutter - assignment
- Clutter confessions - discussion
- Make it more concise - assignment

## **X. Localizing the Story - March 24-16**

- Localizing a Story - content

## **XI: Strategic Communication - March 31, April 2**

- Social Media Post - content
- Social Media Release - content
- Social Media Video - content

## **Capstone Work Week - April 7-9**

## **XII. Sins of Journalism - 14, 16**

- Media Bias - discussion
- What's the Problem - assignment
- Inappropriate wording - assignment

**Capstone Presentation Week -April 21, 23**