

MCOM 3303: Reporting and News Writing Spring 2019

MWF 10:10 a.m. – 11:05 a.m. HPR 275

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Office: UC 3111A **Office Hours:** Tuesdays 9:30-12:30 and by appointment

As part of the social media requirements for the course, please follow these accounts with your professional Twitter account: @MyPSMP @LorriAllenTV

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Introduction to fundamental journalism for print media, with an emphasis on interviewing, source development and research. This course will help you develop news reporting, writing and editing skills. You will be exposed to classic and cutting-edge newsgathering practices; you will write and report news and learn unique styles of print as well as online journalism.

We will also explore policy, principles and concepts basic to the field of journalism. We will practice typical assignments given to entry-level reporters.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Write accurate and compelling news stories.
2. Write correctly and clearly using formats and storytelling styles for the audiences and purposes required for public relations/integrated marketing and multimedia journalism.
3. Develop advanced interviewing and reporting skills used in the gathering and dissemination of news and information in multimedia journalism.
4. Report and write news stories from beats, speeches and other typical genres.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principals and issues.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of, and be able to apply, the principles and laws governing freedom of speech and the press.

REQUIRED Texts:

1. Christian, Darrell, et.al (2018). *2018 Associated Press Stylebook*. New York: Associated Press. You may get the online version, but adhere to online classroom policies.
2. Filak, Vincent F. (2019). *Dynamics of News Reporting & Writing: Foundational Skills for a Digital Age*, CQ Press **ISBN:** 978-1-5063-4474-4
3. Clark, Roy Peter, (2006) *Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer*, Little, Brown and Company **ISBN:** 978-0316014991

Recommended Reading:

Strunk Jr., W., and White, E.B. (2000). *The Elements of Style (4th Ed.)*, New York: Longman.

The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect by Bill Kovach & Tom Rosenstiel

REQUIRED MEDIA CONSUMPTION:

Immerse yourself in mass media. Read newspapers and magazines daily in print and online. Examine press releases and advertising campaigns. **To encourage this habit, you will have a current events/AP Style quiz on Fridays.**

Suggested sources:

Newspapers: *The Patriot, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Dallas Morning News, The Washington Post*

Magazines: *The New Yorker, Texas Monthly, Atlantic Monthly, Smithsonian* (most of these have free articles online)

Viewing: PBS News hour – online and on the air, local television stations, CBS Morning News

Online: [Politico.com](http://politico.com), bbc.com, TexasTribune.org, <https://www.propublica.org>, TheTylerLoop.com

Listening: NPR's All Things Considered, Morning Edition

Resources: www.grammarly.com, Poynter.org

RECOMMENDED Membership:

Investigative Reporters & Editors offers a student membership for \$25 per year.

<https://www.ire.org/membership/terms-and-rates>

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS CLASS:

You will be required to attend and cover events outside of class time.

These include a city council meeting on a Wednesday morning before Spring Break and an evening lecture **March 19**.

Attendance: **Attendance is mandatory.** Our class is like a business. We're partners, and I expect you to show up as you expect me to show up. Attendance and participation are 50 points toward your grade. We have 42 class periods, so I'll start with you 8. **For every unexcused absence, subtract a point. For days with poor participation or rules violations, subtract at least half a point.**

Ideal participation means you're paying attention, contributing relevant questions or observations and not distracted by a classmate or by devices that I prefer you don't use during lectures unless asked to.

This class is only 55 minutes, so please don't leave the room unless it's an emergency.

- You are responsible for turning in all assignments by deadline. **And they must be turned in the way the rubric instructs you.** That may be hard copy one time, Canvas another or even by email. This is to teach you to follow instructions and learn how newsrooms work. *If the assignment is not turned in the way it is supposed to be, it won't be accepted.*
- If you are 10 minutes late or leave early, you may be considered absent.
- **No make-up tests or quizzes will be allowed.**
- If you are sick, provide a doctor's note to receive an excused absence.
- **Work is NOT an excuse; school comes first.**
- If a close family member dies, bring in the obituary or funeral program to receive an excused absence. **"Close" means your siblings, spouse, parents, child or grandparents.**
- You are responsible for lecture materials, announcements and assignments made during any absence. **But don't be absent.**
- **Students late to class on test/quiz days may not be allowed to take the exam if students have already completed it.**

Assignment Policy:

- Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due at the start of each class.
- For assignments sent to me electronically, use only Word, Google Docs or PDF. I prefer Word.
- Assignments must be typed using the format required for the assignment.
- Assignments and due dates may change at the instructor's discretion with fair notice.
- You must complete all assignments to pass the course. This does not mean, however, that merely completing all assignments guarantees a passing grade.
- **All assignments must include your name, date, assignment name, course name and word count at the top left.**
- **NO LATE PAPERS** will be accepted. However, you may turn them in early.

Classroom Courtesies:

- **No cellphone, tablet, wearable or other device may be used during class** unless the assignment specifically calls for it. No calls, no texts, no status update checks. If I see you using a device, I may not mention it, but your **participation grade for the day will suffer.**
- Do not use the lab computers on lecture days unless authorized. That

means the monitors must be lowered so that I can see you and you can see me.

- No eating. Only clear water in a container with a lid is allowed.

Access to Technology:

- I use Canvas and email to communicate.
- Email policy: on weekdays, I'll do my best to answer your questions in 24 hours. On weekends, I'll do my best to answer in 48 hours.

Academic Honesty:

- Practice academic integrity and accept responsibility for your actions.
- Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, unattributed use of others' work (including test and paper "banks"), disruption of class, and discourtesy 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.
- I will check papers through Turnitin.

PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. This 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>.

GRADING: Here are details on how you'll be graded: (1,000 points possible)

• **Class attendance and participation** (50 points): You are expected to be at all classes. You get 100 points for that *if you also participate in discussions and remain engaged*. You are still subject to University Policies regarding attendance. Excessive absences are not tolerated. We simply cover too much, too quickly for you to miss class.

• **Four reporting/writing assignments** (100 points each): You will have four assignments designed to develop your reporting and writing skills. Expect to report and write them outside of class.

• **The Patriot Story** (100 points): Attend a Patriot Student Media staff meeting (4:30 on Tuesdays in UC 3114) and complete an article assignment for the newspaper. This will be a writing assignment to be determined between you and the editor. You will, though, turn your copy into me first.

• **Main Story** (200 points): Pick an issue to investigate, research, report and write. You have five pieces to this assignment – story ideas (10), sources (10),

investigation (10), interview questions (10), first draft (10) and final story (100).

- **Two tests** (100 points each): Each exam will test your comprehension of reading and in-class discussions.
- **Current events/AP style quizzes.** (50 points total): These will be most Fridays that we have class scheduled and will test your knowledge of current events and AP style. Lecture content may be included, too. Each one is worth 5 points.
- **Extra Credit:** You have the opportunity to earn extra credit.

Grades are based on the overall **points** available for you to earn.

A: 900-1,000 **B:** 800-899 **C:** 700-799 **D:** 600-699 **F:** 0-599

Grading: Each assignment will have specific criteria, but the following applies to all assignments:

- **Clean copy** - Your grade will be reduced for grammar, spelling, punctuation and AP Style errors.
- **Facts are important** - A fact error results in a zero for the assignment.
- **Names are important** - If you misspell a name (including mine!) once, points will be taken off. If you misspell a name again in another assignment, you will get a zero for the assignment.

Plus, **every news story must have at least two sources** and be of interest to **the UT Tyler community: students, staff and/or faculty.**

Note: This is a rigorous class. With a writing assignment due almost every week, with lots of reading and media to observe, manage your time carefully. **In accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy, the assignments and content will increase in difficulty.** The good news is that completing this class will prepare you for a career in journalism.

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: ***Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.***

Educating students to take their place in the world engenders a serious responsibility for any educational institution. The University of Texas at Tyler recognizes that future decisions made by these citizens must be grounded in ethics as well as in academic knowledge if these decisions will protect and benefit society. For these reasons, UT Tyler takes a proactive stand and adopts an Honor code throughout the campus so students may be equipped with an ethical framework for their future.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To understand policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information: <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

Tobacco-Free

All forms of tobacco are banned on the main campus, branch campuses and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco and all other tobacco products. Cessation programs are available to students to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Spring, **the Census Date is Jan. 28**) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100 percent refunds for partial withdrawals. (no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after

the census date. Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have questions.

Student Accessibility and Resources

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act and the ADA Amendments Act, the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator. If you are unsure if the above criteria apply to you, but have questions or concerns, please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment, visit the SAR office located in UC 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time, the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm sounds. Follow the instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

“**Cheating**” includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying from another student's test paper;

- Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- Failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- Possession during a test of materials, which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class, notes or specifically designed “crib notes;”
The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if the person administering the test has specifically prohibited them;
- Using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution or computer program;
- Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- Discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- Divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- Paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- Taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- Misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

“**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.

“**Collusion**” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)