

MCOM 3303: Reporting and News Writing Spring 2017

MWF 11:15 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. HPR 275

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Office: UC 3111A **Office Hours:** 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. M,W or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Introduction to fundamental journalistic writing for print media, with an emphasis on interviewing, source development and research. This course is designed to help students develop news reporting and writing skills. Students will be exposed to newsgathering practices; they 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.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. Write news stories that are accurate and compelling.
2. Write correctly and clearly using the formats and compelling 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 READING:

1. Christian, D., ed. (2016). *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. New York, NY: The Associated Press. **ISBN-13:** 978-0465062942 **ISBN-10:** 0465062946 Also available online at www.apstylebook.org.
2. Craig, Richard; Scanlan Chip (2014). *News Writing and Reporting*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press ISBN: 9780195188325
3. Clark, Roy Peter, (2006) *Writing Tools; 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer*, Little, Brown and Company **ISBN-13:** 978-0316014991 **ISBN-10:** 0316014990

In addition to the above, the following books will make you better writers:

- Strunk Jr., W., & White, E.B. (2000). *The Elements of Style (4th Ed.)*, New York: Longman.
- Shertzer, Margaret (1996). *The Elements of Grammar*, New York:

Longman.

- Walsh, Bill (2004). *The Elephants of Style*, New York: Mc-Graw Hill

This book will make you a better journalist:

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. Watch news programs daily. Examine press releases and advertising campaigns. Look at YouTube, Facebook and other social media in the context of this class. Bring in clips, articles, observations, opinions and ideas to class for discussion. We will have a current events quiz each Friday.

Here are suggested sources:

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

Magazines: *The Economist, Time, The New Yorker, Texas Monthly, Atlantic Monthly, National Geographic*

Viewing: PBS News hour – online and on the air; CNN's Anderson Cooper 360, local television stations

Online: Politico.com, bbc.com, TexasTribune.org, <https://www.propublica.org>, Poynter.org

Listening: NPR stations streamed

Resources: www.grammarly.com, newsroom101.net

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS CLASS:

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. I treat our class like a business. We're partners, and I expect you to show up as you expect me to show up. Attendance and participation will make up 100 points toward your grade. We will have about 35 class periods, so if you have an unexcused absence, take 2.8 points off your total.

- 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, Blackboard 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, you must 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 relatives are *your* siblings, 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 the test or quiz.

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.
- 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.
- NO LATE PAPERS will be accepted. However, as soon as you receive the rubric for the assignment, you may turn it in.

Classroom Courtesies:

- No cellphone, tablet 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 when you're not supposed to be, I will take it.

The first time you are using a device when you're not supposed to be, I will take it for the rest of the class period. The second time, you must pay \$5 to get it back, the third \$10 and so on. The money will be donated to the Communication Club.

- 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. Water in a container with a lid is allowed.
- Talk, debate, ask questions and challenge but stay on topic.

Access to Technology:

- I use Blackboard to communicate. Check Blackboard regularly.
- My email policy: on weekdays, I will do my best to answer your questions in 24 hours. On weekends, I will do my best to answer your questions 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.

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: (1,200 points possible)

- **Class attendance and participation** (100 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 in this class or university. We simply cover too much for you to miss class.
- **Five reporting/writing assignments** (100 points each): There will be five exercises designed to develop your reporting and writing skills. Expect to report and write them outside of class.
- **Talon Story** (100 points): Attend a *Talon* staff meeting (Mondays at 5:30 in UC 3114) and complete one assignment for the *Patriot Talon*. This will be a writing assignment of at least 20 inches (700-800 words) 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 research, report and write. You have five pieces to this assignment – story ideas (25), sources (25), interview questions (25), first draft (25) and final story (100).
- **Two tests** (100 points each): Each exam will test your comprehension of reading and in-class discussions up to the point of the test.
- **Current events/AP style quizzes.** (100 points total): These will be most Fridays that we have class scheduled and will test your knowledge of current events and AP style. A question on classroom content may be included, too. Each one is worth 10 points.
- **Extra Credit:** You will 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** - Two or more fact errors result 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 the same name again in another assignment, you will get a zero for the assignment.

TENTATIVE* TIMETABLE **SC = Scanlan/Craig (chapters) CL = Clark (tools)**

*****Note dates and times not within normal class time** so that you can get off work or out of other obligations **to attend events that require coverage:**

Jan. 31, 6 p.m. – UC Theater – The Speech assignment

Feb. 23, 6 p.m. – Liberty Theater – The Event assignment

March 8, 9 a.m. – City Hall – The Meeting assignment

Date	General Topic	Read before	Assignment(s) Due
Week 1 1/18 1/20	Course Introduction Quiz 1; Journalism essentials	SC 1, CL 1-4	Student Data Sheet
Week 2 1/23 1/25 1/27	Generating Story Ideas Guest Lecturer: Dr. Jeff Patterson Guest Lecturer: Dr. David Paterno	SC 2	MS: 5 ideas
Week 3 1/30 1/31 2/1 2/3	Covering Speeches, Useful Habits Cover Speech Guest Lecturer: Coshandra Dillard Quiz 2; Research	SC pp. 376-379, Ch. 5, CL 40-46 SC 7, CL 14	#1 The Speech
Week 4 2/6 2/8 2/10	Developing Sources Wonderful Words Quiz 3; Interviewing	IRE handout SC 8, CL 5-10 SC 6	MS: Sources
Week 5 2/13 2/15 2/17	Storytelling Writing Leads Guest Lecturer: Faith Harper	SC 4, CL 25, 32 SC 10, CL 31	MS: Questions
Week 6 2/20 2/22 2/23 2/24	Story Forms Numbers, part 1 Cover Historical Movie NO CLASS... but	CL 11-13, SC 11 SC pp. 190-197	

			Email your pitch on numbers story for approval by 1 p.m.
Week 7 2/27 3/1 3/3	Numbers, part 2 WRITING DAY Quiz 4; Writing Obituaries	SC pp. 197-215 SC 19	#2 The Event
Week 8 3/6 3/8 3/10	Covering Meetings City Hall, 9 a.m. (Writing time in class if City Council ends by 11:25) Quiz 5; First Assignments	SC pp. 379-382 SC pp. 368-376, 384-391	#3 Numbers #4 The Meeting
Week 10 3/13-17	SPRING BREAK!		
Week 11 3/20 3/22 3/24	Guest Lecturer: Danny Mogle WRITING DAY for MS and/or Talon Story Quiz 6; Review: What have we learned so far?	In Magazine CL 16-19	MS: First Draft
Week 12 3/27 3/28-4/1	Exam NO CLASS		
Week 13 4/3 4/5 4/7	Discussion of Snow Fall Interactive Storytelling Quiz 7; Beats	Snow Fall SC 13 SC 18	Talon story due if not already submitted
Week 14 4/10 4/12 4/14	Feedback on MS drafts WRITING DAY - MS Quiz 8; Roles and Opportunities	CL 49 SC 12	#5 The Interactive Report
Week 15 4/17 4/19 4/21	Breaking News Libel, Privacy, Ethics Quiz 9; Broadcasting	SC 20 SC 16 SC pp. 300-317; 319-323, CL 37	
Week 16 4/24 4/26 4/28	Diversity Getting and Keeping a Job Quiz 10; Review-what have we learned since the last exam?	SC 15 SC 21	MS: Final Story

Week 17			
5/1	Study Day		
5/2-6	Final Exam Day - TBD		

***This timetable is subject to change**

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. 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, The University of Texas at 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 know and understand the 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 in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at

<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 University 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 looking 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. 29) 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. (There is 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 any questions.

Student Accessibility and Resources

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), 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, Cynthia Lowery Staples. 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. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu

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 goes off. Follow your 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 of Texas at Tyler, 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.

All written work will be subject to review by SafeAssign™, available on Blackboard.

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)