

MCOM 2311.002 Writing for Mass Media

Instructor: Danny Mogle

Office:

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Office Hours: By appointment

Phone: 903-617-8196. Text me any time you need me. I will return the message ASAP.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog: Techniques of information gathering and writing for various audiences. Practice in interviewing, objective observation, document research including the internet and analysis. Emphasis is on integration of emerging media. Must be taken in the first nine hours in program for communications majors.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

Effective writing is clean, clear, concise and cohesive. Outstanding writing is all of that and compelling.

Students will be able to:

- Write correctly and clearly using formats and styles appropriate for public relations/integrated communication or multimedia journalism for the audiences and purposes required.
- Produce accurate news/feature stories in appropriate format when given sets of facts.
- Produce web, strategic communications materials in appropriate format when given sets of facts.
- Demonstrate proficiency in grammar and word use; writing concisely and accurately; and use of the Associated Press guidelines.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of fairness, verification and attribution in mass media industries.
- Recognize what constitutes libel, appropriation, intrusion, false light, and publicity about private facts.
- Recognize areas of ethical concerns in writing for the media or strategic communications.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Associated Press Stylebook. Also available online at www.apstylebook.org ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#) (I would recommend ordering it online. Make sure it is no older than 2015).

RECOMMENDED

An essential book for anyone who works in journalism: "The Elements of Style," Strunk & White.

Newspapers: Tyler Morning Telegraph, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Dallas Morning News, etc.

Magazines: Texas Monthly, Time, Atlantic Monthly, National Geographic

Viewing: PBS Newshour, CNN, Fox News, MSNBC

Online: Politico.com, bbc.com, *TexasTribune.org*, *Probulica.org*, *Poynter.org*

Radio: KERA radio

GRADING

There are 1,000 points to earn in a semester. The final grade is based on the percentage of overall points earned. A: 900-1,000 B: 800-899 C: 700-799 D: 600-699 F: 0-599 I: Incomplete

Graded Assignments (late assignments are not accepted; and receive a 0)

- Applying News Value - 20 pts., 2%
- Using the AP Stylebook - 50 pts., 5%
- AP Style: The Essentials - 50 pts., 5%
- Eliminating Words - 20 pts., 2%
- Sit Down And Write - 20 pts., 2%
- Observation - 30 pts., 3%

- Writing Leads - 20 pts., 2%
- Writing News (from prompt) - 50 pts., 5%
- Writing News -100 pts., 10%
- Planning a Digital Package - 20 pts., 2%
- Writing for Radio/TV (Reader) - 50 pts., 5%
- Working With A News Release - 40 pts., 4%
- Applying Media Law - 30 pts., 3%

500 pts. 50% of grade

Quizzes (most quizzes or 10 questions worth 2 points each)

- Professional Standards - 20 pts., 2%
- Sins of Journalism - 20 pts., 2%
- Writing Concisely - 20 pts., 2%
- Gathering Information - 20 pts., 2%
- Using Quotes - 20 pts., 2%
- The Inverted Pyramid - 20 pts., 2%
- Narrative Techniques - 20 pts., 2%
- Digital Media - 20 pts., 2%
- Writing for Broadcast - 20 pts., 2%
- Strategic Communications - 10 pts., 1%
- 0 – Ethics - 10 pts., 1%

200 pts. 20%

Major Exams

- Midterm - 150 pts; 15%
- final - 150 pts.; 5%

300 pts. 30%

Grading rubrics and scores: Assignments come with a rubric to explain how the grade is determined. The vast majority of graded work is done in or submitted through Canvas. All work is assigned a point value.

COURSE MATERIAL BY UNIT

For each unit, students will receive a study guide emphasizing key concepts to master. Units typically include a lecture based on a PowerPoint and/or resources materials and a skills-building exercise. Most units will end with a quiz.

- PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
- SINS OF JOURNALISM
- WRITING TOOLS
- AP STYLE
- WRITING CONCISELY
- GATHERING INFORMATION
- USING QUOTES
- MID-TERM TEST
- STORY STRUCTURES
- INVERTED PYRAMID
- NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES
- WRITING PROJECT
- DIGITAL MEDIA
- WRITING FOR BROADCAST
- STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION (PR, Advertising, Marketing)
- ETHICS
- MEDIA LAW

- **FINALS TEST**

ATTENDANCE

I cannot teach you unless you are in class. This is a lecture class.

- Students who miss class for school-sponsored activities or for a medical reason must notify me PRIOR to the absence in order to make up work. **Texting me is the best way to do this.**
- Students who believe they have a compelling reason for missing class should speak to me.
- Quizzes will be given within the first few minutes of class. Those who are tardy will not be given extra time.

CLASS POLICIES

- **No cellphone use during class.** No calls. No texting. Set your phones on vibrate.
- The class is held in a writing lab with a computer on every desk.
- Drinks and snacks are not allowed.
- Robust discussion is encouraged. Everyone must be respectful of differing opinions. Personal "attacks" on others will not be tolerated.
- You cannot listen to audio via headphones in class.
- Cheating is not to be tolerated. See academic honesty.

Access to Technology:

I use Canvas to post announcements and grades and give and receive graded work.

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>

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center provides tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Location: BUS 202. 903-565-5995.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

1. University Policies

1. 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. 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> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.
2. 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> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.
3. All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler 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. There are several cessation programs 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 (Links to an external site.)

4. **UT Tyler Honor Code:**
5. **Campus Carry:**
6. **UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University:**

- **Academic Honesty Policy:** Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Anyone caught cheating will earn a "0" for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. Plagiarism (the use of written and oral words or ideas of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker's or writer's indebtedness to that person) will not be tolerated. This includes the use of papers or other materials previously submitted to instructors in other classes, as well as video and audio recordings. Students caught plagiarizing will fail this class and be subject to academic and disciplinary action. **(See next section for University Policy)**

1. **Student Standards of Academic Conduct**

1. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:
 1. copying from another student's test paper;
 2. using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
 3. failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
 4. 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 they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
 5. using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
 6. collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
 7. discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
 8. divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor 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;
 9. substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
 10. 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;
 11. falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
 12. 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
 13. 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.
2. "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.
3. "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.
4. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.
5. 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.
2. **The U-T Tyler Writing Center** provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Location: BUS 202. Appointments: 903-565-5995.
3. **Disability/Accessibility Services:**
 1. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> (Links to an external site.) and fill out the New Student application.
 2. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information,

including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. , the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

4. **Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies:**

1. Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
2. Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
3. Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
4. Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
5. Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid
6. 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 Fall, the **Census Date is Sept. 10.**) 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.
7. 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.
8. The **Census Date (Sept. 10th)** is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

5. **State-Mandated Course Drop Policy:**

1. 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 (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).
2. 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 Absence due to Religious Observance:**

1. 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:**

1. 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:**

1. 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:**

1. 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.
2. **UT Tyler Resources for Students:**
 1. UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
 2. UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
 3. The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
 4. UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)