

**Writing for the Media**  
**University of Wisconsin Oshkosh**  
**Fall 2006**

**Course:** Journalism 61-221-A01  
**Class hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:20 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
**Room:** 150 Clow  
**Instructor:** Grace Lim  
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**Office:** 126B

**Office hours:** MW, 8:30 to 10 a.m.; TTh, 8:30 to 9:15 a.m. and by appointment.

**Required Texts:**

- *The Associated Press Stylebook* (latest edition). You must bring this book to class.
- *Reporting for the Media* (8<sup>th</sup> edition), Fedler, et al.
- *The Elements of Style* (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Strunk and White (also available for free on-line at <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>).
- A good dictionary, like a Webster's Collegiate. If you don't own one, please purchase one.

**Ongoing Readings:**

- *The New York Times* (daily) You can get the main stories for free on-line at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com). You'll need to sign up. Copies of *The New York Times* can be found in the Journalism Department's reading room and in Polk Library.
- *Advance-Titan*
- Copied material. I will hand this out as assigned.

The purpose of this class is to make you a better writer, regardless of what field of mass communications you enter. This course will provide a foundation for all other writing classes you may take, as well as get you ready for professional work or internships. We will emphasize accuracy, grammar, clarity, sentence construction, organization and—let's say it again—accuracy.

**The role of journalism in Liberal Arts education** - Journalists are the eyes, ears, voice and heart of society. Journalists question status quo; they fight for the proverbial "truth, justice and the American way." The skills students learn are not exclusively tailored to those who will become editors or journalists. These skills will enable the students to value accuracy and fairness. They will not be afraid to ask questions. They will not be afraid to prompt change.

In the writing lab, you will learn:

- To create stories directly on the computer.
- To work efficiently under deadline pressure.

- To organize information using typical news formats.
- To identify and eliminate mechanical problems from your writing.
- To use AP style.
- To be accurate.
- To make good news judgments.

**Attendance:** Mandatory. Also, be on time. In the “real world,” reporters who show up late for an assignment often miss the story. We will write virtually every day in this class. You must be here to take notes for your next assignment. You cannot borrow anyone else’s notes. If you are not prepared to come to class every day, please drop the class immediately.

In the event of a major illness, a death in the family or other serious situation, please contact me by telephone or leave a message on voice mail before you are absent. It is important and mandatory that you contact me the day of your absence by phone or in person. We will work out a solution regarding your class work.

**Late papers:** Not accepted except under rare situations to be determined solely by the instructor. Again, it is important and your responsibility to contact the professor before any absence to make arrangements to avoid missing work.

I run this class exactly like the newsroom of a metropolitan daily newspaper or other writing venues such as an advertising or PR agency. I expect you to adhere to the same professional standards required of writers at any of these settings.

### Grading

Story/writing assignments	500 points
Mid-term	100 points
Final	200 points
Oral presentations/ Style exercises/ Current event quizzes	150 points
Class participation	50 points
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	1,000 points

You are also expected to contribute to class discussions.

### Final letters grades will be based on the following scale:

A	900 to 1,000	C	730 to 779
AB	870 to 899	CD	680 to 629
B	830 to 869	D	600 to 679
BC	780 to 829	F	000 to 599

**The cutoff points for grades are not negotiable. In other words, an 869 will translate into a B and will not be rounded up to an AB. It is possible that you will come within a handful of points for a higher grade, but if you wish to receive that higher grade, you must earn it, which you can do by putting maximum effort into each**

**assignment.**

**Note: An “A” grade is given to any story deemed publishable. Keep this in mind. Writing well takes time, effort and care.**

Spelling, grammar and punctuation count. Don’t rely exclusively on spell check. If in doubt, check a dictionary or the AP Stylebook.

**Accuracy:** A misspelled proper name of any kind – first name, last name, company name, country name, city name or any other proper name – will result in an automatic zero on your story.

Stories and all other assignments will be due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted.

Since this class is a prerequisite for further journalism study, you must earn at least a “C” grade to continue in the major or minor.

**Cheating, plagiarism and academic dishonesty:** Do not cheat. We follow the university policy on cheating and plagiarism. I will pursue and punish any case of cheating or plagiarism. Anyone who cheats and plagiarizes will be given an automatic “F” in the class. No exceptions.

**Students with Disabilities:** We follow the university policy on disabilities. Contact the Dean of Students at 424-3100 (voice) or 424-1319 (TTY). The Web site is <http://www.uwosh.edu/dean/disabilities.htm>.

Course schedule may change depending on the pace of the class, the pace of the instructor, guest speakers or forces beyond human control.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>Chapters</b>
9/6	Intro/Format and style	1,2
9/11	Format Style cont. /Spelling, grammar review	2,3,4
9/13	Making news judgments	5
9/18	Basic News Leads	6
9/20	Alternate Leads	7
9/25	Writing a complete story, punctuation review	8
9/27	Using quotations	9
10/2	Interviews	10
10/4	Guest speaker	
10/9	Enterprise story proposal class review	
10/11	Obits	11

10/16	Shorts, brights, etc.	13
10/18	Review for mid-term	
10/23	Mid-term	
10/25	Speeches and elections	12
10/30	Guest speaker	
11/1	Public Affairs reporting I	15
11/6	Public Affairs reporting II	
11/9	The role of the journalist	21
11/13	Op-ed/Reviews	
11/15	News Media and PR I	19
11/20	News Media and PR II	
11/27	Writing for Radio/Broadcast	18
11/29	The Media and the Web	16
12/4	Careers in the Media	22
12/6	Review for final	
12/11	Final	
12/13	Wrap-up (final returned)	