

Reporting
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Fall 2007

Course: Journalism 61-327
Class hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays 8 to 10:10 a.m.
Room: 150 Clow
Instructor: Grace Lim
E-mail: limg@uwosh.edu (if possible, e-mail first, before calling)
Phone: 920-233-2012 (use this number and leave message);
920-424-1042 (use Journalism main number as last resort)
Office: Clow 124
Office hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays 10:15-11:30 a.m. and by appointment

Required Texts and Materials:

- *The Associated Press Stylebook* (latest edition)
- *Reporting for the Media* (10th edition), Melvin Mencher
- *The Elements of Style* (4th edition), Strunk and White (also available for free on-line at <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>)
- A pocket-size or steno notebook for interviewing
- A jump drive

Optional equipment:

- A cell phone with voicemail or an answering machine with remote access
- A handheld tape recorder

Ongoing Readings:

- *The New York Times* (daily) You can get the main stories for free on-line at 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*
- *The Oshkosh Northwestern*
- Copied material. I will hand this out as assigned.

The purpose of this class is to teach you the skills that reporters use in a print job. In this class, you will find that being a good writer is not enough; you can be a good writer and an awful reporter. Reporters need to discern what is news. Reporters investigate, interview, find facts from a variety of sources and make the difficult calls – literally and ethically. This class is also designed to make you a better writer, regardless of what field of mass communications you enter. This course will enhance foundation already set from your previous media writing course.

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.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will have been given the chance to learn how to do the following:

- Work on deadline.
- Report and write in a fair, accurate and compelling manner.
- Deliver clean copy.
- Write articles on a variety of topics.
- Assess the quality of other’s reporting and writing.
- Be well-informed about current events, especially in the geographic area that you are covering.
- Develop and apply news judgment.
- Develop and improve interview skills.

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.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the assignment/notes from a classmate.

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. **Routine medical appointments, part-time or full-time jobs do not constitute valid reasons for missing class.**

You are allowed two absences without penalty (you will NOT be able to make up the weekly quizzes and labs. I will drop the lowest quiz grade and lowest lab grade at the end of the semester). After that, every class missed for reasons not specified by University policy is one letter grade off your final grade.

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 Policy

5 Stories	500 points
• Story 1	50 points
• Story 2	50 points
• Story 3	100 points
• Story 4	100 points
• Story 5	200 points
4 Peer Reviews	100 points
Quizzes	100 points
MISC (Quizzes, Labs, Homework, Class Participation)	200 points
Mid-term Exam	100 points
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	1,000 points

Final letters grades will be based on the following scale:

A	900 to 1000	C	730 to 779
AB	870 to 899	CD	680 to 729
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.

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

You must write in Microsoft Word. If you have something other than Microsoft Word, you must save your document file in rich text format (.rtf). I suggest you save your files to a jump drive, and, as an extra precaution, e-mail the files to yourself.

Think paperless. We will do our part to save trees by limiting the paper we use. All stories will be submitted electronically through D2L.

You will submit your story drafts onto the Peer Review discussion board. You will be divided into groups of threes for the peer reviews.

After you review the suggestions from your peers, you will rewrite your story and submit the final draft to assigned dropbox in D2L.

The key to good writing is this: writing is rewriting.

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.

Date	Tuesday	Date	Thursday
		9/6	Intro Quizzes handouts (Vocab/Geo/QL)

			Book/CDs Presidential candidates
9/11	R- Ch. 2 Components of the Story	9/13	R- Ch. 3 What is News?
9/18	Q1 R- Ch. 5 The Lead	9/20	Lead Cont. R- Ch. 16 Speeches and News Conferences
9/25	Q2 R-Ch. 6 Story Structure	9/27	Story Structure Cont. R- Ch. 18 Accidents and Disasters
10/2	Q3 R- Ch. 15 Interviewing Principles and Practices	10/4	Story 1-Draft Due (Event) R- Ch. 20 The Police Beat
10/9	PR1 Due Q4 R-Ch. 11 Digging for Information	10/11	Story 1 Final Due R – Ch. 21 The Courts
10/16	Q5 R-Ch. 14 Finding, Cultivation and Using Sources	10/18	R- Ch. 24 Local Govt. and Education
10/23	Q6 R- Ch. 5 The Internet and Other Tools of the Trade	10/25	Story 2 Draft Due (Meeting) R- Ch. 8 Sports
10/30	PR2 Due Q7 R- Ch. 13 Building and Using Background	11/1	Story 2 Final Due TBD
11/6	Q8 R- Ch. 7 The Writer’s Art	11/8	Story 3 Draft Due (Sports)
11/13	PR3 Due Q9 R-TBD	11/15	Story 3 Final Due TBD
11/20	Mid-Term		Thanksgiving
11/27	Oral Presentations R- Ch. 25 Reporters and the Law	11/29	Oral Presentations Story 4 Draft Due (Police)
12/4	PR 4 Due Q10 R- Ch. 27 The Morality of Journalism	12/6	Story 4 Final Due TBD
12/11	Q 11 Final story	12/13	Final Story due (Profile 1,000 words)