

Writing for the Media
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Spring 2009

Course: Journalism 61-221-B01

Class hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays 10:20 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Room: 148 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 hours: 2-3:30 p.m. Tuesdays; 2-4 p.m. Thursdays and by appointment

Required Texts:

The Associated Press Stylebook (any edition within the past 3 years). **You must bring this book to class.**

News Reporting and Writing, 9th edition, The Missouri Group (ISBN: -10:0-312-46419-3)

The Elements of Style (4th 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. 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

Labs/Stories/Quizzes (in-and-out-of-class assignments)	50
Mid-term	10 percent
Final Project	30 percent
Participation/Professionalism	10 percent

You are expected to contribute to class discussions.

Final letters grades will be based on the following scale:

A	90 to 100
AB	87 to 89
B	83 to 86
BC	78 to 82
C	73 to 77
CD	68 to 72
D	60 to 67
F	0 to 59

The cutoff points for grades are not negotiable. In other words, an 86 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>.