

## COM 210 Introduction to Media Writing

### Credit Hours: 3

In-Class Instructional Hours: 2

Labs: 2

Field Work: 0

### Catalog Description:

Prerequisite. English 101 with minimum grade of C

Writing lab with practice in organizing and writing for print and digital media; introduction to news, feature and advocacy writing; application to journalism, public relations and advertising.

### Reasons for Revision:

(Fall 2005). This course was last revised in 1997 as part of a departmental program restructuring. This new proposal is part of a general program review, through which Communication seeks to update its courses in light of departmental experience with the previous program version, evolving departmental needs, and expanding scholarship in the field. Additionally, the department is undertaking this revision to position itself for accreditation by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

<b>Student Learning Outcomes:</b>	<b>Course Content References:</b>	<b>Assessment:</b>
At the completion of this course, students will be able to:		
1. Demonstrate understanding of fundamentals of journalistic writing, research, reporting and editing skills for print and broadcast media and for public relations and advertising	I, II, III, IV	1. Exams, in-class and out-of-class writing assignments, applied projects
2. Exhibit competence in mechanics of concise and clear writing by applying acceptable standards of grammar, spelling, punctuation and style	I, II	2. Exams, in-class and out-of-class writing assignments, applied projects
3. Articulate an understanding of the nature of news, role of journalism in a democratic society, ethical and legal restrictions on news writing, and criteria for journalistic excellence	I, VI	3. Exams, in-class and out-of-class writing assignments, applied projects
4. Demonstrate competence in writing effectively using statistical information and in writing about specializations such as science, business, religion or arts.	V, VII	4. Exams, in-class and out-of-class writing assignments, applied projects
5. Demonstrate basic ability in using internet for online research and computer-generated presentation of information.	VII	5. Exams, in-class and out-of-class writing assignments, applied projects

**Course Content:**

- I. Media writing
  - A. Varieties of media writing
  - B. Editing for content and style
  - C. Definitions of news
  - D. Inverted pyramid
  - E. Associated Press Stylebook
- II. Fundamentals of print journalism writing
  - A. Writing traditional news stories
    - 1. Interviews and speeches
    - 2. Accidents and police reports
    - 3. Legal and governmental proceedings
  - B. Feature and other story structures
    - 1. Personal and organizational profiles (biographies and histories)
    - 2. Backgrounders and position papers
- III. Fundamentals of electronic journalism writing
  - A. Radio
    - 1. The soft lead
    - 2. Writing a news story
    - 3. Actualities and wraparounds
  - B. Television
    - 1. Words and visuals
    - 2. Writing the news story
    - 3. Field reporting and packages
- IV. Fundamentals of public relations writing
  - A. Relationship to journalistic writing
    - 1. News basis and organizational focus
    - 2. Source credibility and message strategies
  - B. News formats
    - 1. News releases
    - 2. Fact sheets
    - 3. Media advisories
  - C. Promotional formats
    - 1. Writing advertising copy
    - 2. Promotional announcements
- V. Statistical literacy
  - A. Computation
  - B. Implication of statistical/financial reports
  - C. Ethical use of statistics
- VI. Legal and ethical issues
  - A. Libel, defamation and privacy
  - B. Editorial judgment
- VII. Journalistic research
  - A. Interviewing
  - B. Computer-based information gathering
  - C. Surveys and other formal methodologies
  - D. Evaluation of research

## **Resources:**

### Current Scholarship in the Field

- Block, M. (2004). *Writing for television, radio and web media* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont CA: Wadsworth.
- Brooks, B.S., Pinson, J., & Wilson, J.G. (2002). *Working with words: A handbook for media writers and editors*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Garrison, B. (2004). *Professional feature writing* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum.
- Goldstein, N. (2002). *The Associate Press stylebook and briefing on media law*. Cambridge MA: Perseus.
- Harerich, I., & Harrison, C. (2001). *Developing online content: The principles of writing and editing for the web*. Hoboken NJ: Wiley.
- Hicks, W., Adams, S., & Gilbert, H. (1999). *Writing for journalists*. London: Routledge.
- Papper, R. A. (2002). *Broadcast news writing stylebook* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- Rich, C. (2002). *Writing and reporting news: A coaching method*. Belmont CA: Wadsworth.
- Schwartz, J. (2001). *Associated Press reporting handbook*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Stoval, J.G. (2001). *Writing for the Mass Media* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Whitaker, W.R., Ramsey, J.E., & Smith, R.D. (2006). *MediaWriting: Print, broadcast and public relations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum.
- Zinsser, W. (2001). *On writing well: The classic guide to writing nonfiction* (25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition). New York: HarperResource.

### Periodicals:

- American Journalism Review ([ajr.com](http://ajr.com))
- Buffalo News ([buffalonews.com](http://buffalonews.com))
- Columbia Journalism Review ([cjr.org](http://cjr.org))
- Editor and Publisher ([editorandpublisher.com](http://editorandpublisher.com))
- Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media
- Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly
- Journalism Educator ([jea.org](http://jea.org))
- Public Relations Review
- Public Relations Strategist ([prsa.org](http://prsa.org))

### Electronic and/or Audiovisual Resources.

- Associated Press ([ap.org](http://ap.org))
- United Press International ([upi.com](http://upi.com))
- News Writing (1995). Annenberg/CPB Collection (Peter Berkow, producer) PN4781 .N34 1995