

JCOM 1130: Beginning News Writing, Section 1
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 to 10:15 a.m.
Animal Science 302

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3-5 p.m., or by appointment

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Web site: Go to <http://www.usu.edu/journalism/faculty/> and click on my last name.

Prerequisites:

Minimum pass in Department of Communication English Proficiency Test and basic typing test.

Required Materials:

AP Stylebook

"News Reporting and Writing" by the Missouri Group, 9th edition

"Workbook for News Reporting and Writing," Missouri Group, 9th edition

A zip drive or CD-ROM for saving your in-class assignments

<http://www.dictionary.com>

Course objectives:

What is news? How do you write about it? This course is a training ground for future reporting courses. You'll learn important principles that you will need to know in future courses in this department. You'll be expected to keep up with the news – in print, online and broadcast. Periodic quizzes will test your knowledge of current events and the AP stylebook. During the first half of the semester, there will be many hypothetical exercises designed to hone news writing skills. During the second half of the semester, there will be several real-life writing experiences, as well as at least two assignments in which you will have to enterprise the story on your own.

Grades:

Show up for class and be on time. In the newspaper business, chronic absenteeism and tardiness will get you fired. You will be rewarded for your commitment to this class. Nearly every class meeting will include an assignment. Unless otherwise announced, every assignment will count. Deadlines are absolute just like they are in the real world. If you're sick and unable to attend class, let me know in advance. Stories will be graded for a) content and organization, and b) mechanics (spelling, grammar, AP style, etc.)

In-class and homework assignments: 200 points

Guest speaker and enterprise stories: 100 points

Ten quizzes on AP stylebook and current events: 200 points
Midterm: 150 points
Final: 150 points

Total possible: 800 points

Final grade:

A = 752 to 800 points	A- = 720 to 751 points	B+ = 696 to 719 points
B = 664 to 695 points	B- = 640 to 663 points	C+ = 616 to 639 points
C = 584 to 615 points	C- = 560 to 583 points	D+ = 536 to 559 points
D = 480 to 535 points	F = 479 points and below	

Classroom etiquette:

No cell phone calls or text messaging in class. No Web surfing or emailing when you're at the computer terminal. Do not use the newsroom computer keyboards to take notes. Do it the old-fashioned way. This is how you will have to do it when you become a reporter.

Plagiarism:

Do not put your name on assignments done in concert with someone else or that have been done by someone else. Plagiarism includes knowingly “representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one’s own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials” (*Code of Policies and Procedures for Students*, Article V, Section 3A.1). The university’s penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include “#1) warning or reprimand and #2) grade adjustment” (see: Article VI, Section 1A): Other penalties may also be imposed at the Dean’s discretion. These include probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, referral to psychological counseling, and other appropriate disciplinary actions. Because public trust and personal credibility are essential to journalists and other professional communicators, **the JCom department observes a zero-tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty:** Any documented form of academic dishonesty—including plagiarism—will result in **an automatic F in the course** and a report to the department head, the dean of the college and the USU vice president for student services. JCom students who engage in documented academic dishonesty may be dropped from the major. Students who hand in similar or identical work will receive an “F” regardless of who copied from whom. If you have any questions about what’s acceptable work under strict codes of academic honesty, see the USU Code of Policies and Procedures for Students, or consult your professor. Any suspicious work may be submitted to a database that compares student papers to other student and

published work in a web database. **NOTE: YOUR WORK WILL BE PUBLISHED**, so if you cheat you will get caught. Somebody always spots plagiarism online.

Two and out: Students may take a JCOM class a maximum of two times. Failure to get the minimum grade of C+ in the premajor core (JCOM1500, 1130 and 2010) or of C in the rest of the JCOM curriculum will cause the student to be dropped from the JCOM major. Students who are dropped must enroll in another department or declare a general studies major.

HOW TO SET UP YOUR COPY on the COMPUTER SCREEN for PRINTOUT:

Remember or write down your user name and password.

SLUG (Story name or assignment)
your full name
date

Double space body copy so your editor (me) can make comments. Indent each paragraph except first one.

Save your story regularly.

Always ask me before sending to the printer — so I can double-check the computer's preferences (which people are prone to change from time to time) ... otherwise, you may lose all your work.

Class Readings and Activities:

Bring text, workbook and AP stylebook to every class meeting. Read the assigned chapter before class and be prepared to participate in discussions. The following is the approximate schedule. Assignments will be announced in class. I reserve the right to make changes in the schedule.

Week 1: Aug. 24 & 26

Syllabus, Chapter 1

Week 2: Aug. 31 & Sept. 2

Chapter 7, Textbook Appendix 2, Abbreviations

Week 3: Sept. 9 only. No class on Sept. 7

Chapter 7, Textbook Appendix 2, Abbreviations

Week 4: Sept. 14 & 16

Chapter 7
Chapter 8, p. 164-168, 178-184
Textbook Appendix 2, Abbreviations

Week 5: Sept. 21 & 23
Ch. 4, Textbook Appendix 2, Capitalization

Week 6: Sept. 28 & Sept. 30
Ch. 3, Textbook Appendix 2, Capitalization

Week 7: Oct. 5 & 7
Textbook Appendix 2, Capitalization
Mid-term

Week 8: Oct. 12 & 14
Ch. 5, Textbook Appendix 2, Numbers

Week 9: Oct. 19 & 21
Ch. 12, Textbook Appendix 2, Numbers

Week 10: Oct. 26 & 28
Ch. 11, Textbook Appendix 1 through “Missing Commas; AP Styleguide, Punctuation through “Comma”
Guest speaker

Week 11: Nov. 2 & Nov. 4
Ch. 19, Textbook Appendix 1 to end; AP Styleguide, Punctuation to end
Guest speaker

Week 12: Nov. 9 & Nov. 11
Enterprise stories

Week 13: Nov. 16 & 18
Enterprise stories

Week 14: No class this week. Thanksgiving Break. Classroom computers available on Monday during regular class meeting.

Week 15: Nov. 30 & Dec. 2
Enterprise stories

Monday, Dec. 7, Final Exam, regular class time. You provide the blue scantron and No. 2 pencil. I provide the exam. Take-home part of exam due **Tuesday, 9 a.m.** Late papers will receive zero credit.