

JOURNALISM 011 C
NEWS WRITING AND REPORTING
Spring 2016
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:10 a.m.-12:35 p.m.
122A LH COMM

Professor Carl Corry

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30-1:30 p.m. or by appointment.

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This course is an introduction to one of the most exciting, frustrating and satisfying careers in the world. Exciting, because journalists cover everything and anything that is happening---that's news! Frustrating, because it's so hard to get the whole story, and to get it right. Satisfying, because when all is said and done, journalists know that they have accomplished something real and important. It is not going too far to say that good journalism is essential to the health and survival of the United States of America.

Journalism today is extraordinarily challenging. The field is experiencing changes as revolutionary as the development of television, the spread of radio and the invention of the telegraph. Journalists today are communicating through a range of media unprecedented in their variety, from traditional newsprint through Twitter, Facebook and other social networks, smartphones, blogs and systems yet unknown.

But none of that will change the foundation of journalism: To go, to see, to tell.

This course will cover the basics of reporting and writing. The main emphasis will be on writing, but we will spend a good deal of time learning about how technology is changing the way we work, from Twitter to other social media to blogs to Facebook to whatever else is coming along. We will discuss what makes news, and will explore the privileges and responsibilities, both legal and ethical, of journalists.

You will also learn how to assess and judge news stories. You will examine how stories develop over time, where the information comes from, how it is used, and how it is reported in different media, This will help you develop the ability to judge the value of any particular story---whether it is accurate, whether it is hyped and distorted, whether it is worth heeding, or whether it should be ignored.

At any time, we will discuss ongoing events and observe how they are reported. If there are stories you are particularly interested in, ask about them. At

least one story during the semester will be intended for publication in the Hofstra Chronicle.

You should begin thinking of our computer lab not as a classroom but as a newsroom. From your desk, you can read the latest wires, go Googling, read blogs, utilize hundreds of databases, and access the full text from articles in thousands of publications worldwide. You will also have occasion to visit and use Hofstra's up-to-date NewsHub, a cybernetic newsroom with all the tools necessary for print, broadcast and online use. We will learn to use these, and many other tools, over the course of the semester. Along the way, you will do a lot of writing – because the only way to become a proficient journalist is to write and write and write.

Class lessons will be structured to teach you how to master skills for reporting and writing on deadline. Outside assignments are designed to give you experience in gathering information, generating story ideas, and writing for publication. This class is highly interactive and intense. The course will require a significant amount of reporting and writing outside of class.

You will also acquire knowledge of the Associated Press style, and of libel guidelines. You should strive to get your work published by the Chronicle, broadcast on WRHU, streamed on Long Island Report, or distributed on any other news medium. The more clips you get, the better your grade. You will be assigned stories on campus and be expected to generate your own story ideas as well.

Goals and Objectives

Students will develop an awareness and appreciation of the foundations of the First Amendment and ethical issues in the media.

Objectives:

Students will implement ethical behaviors in their own practice of journalism, public relations, or media research.

Students will learn to research and report the news, bearing in mind their legal rights and responsibilities.

Students will demonstrate the ability to write clearly, concisely and accurately in forms appropriate to print, broadcast and web journalism.

- Students will demonstrate proficiency in English grammar and mechanics.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to write cogent, clear and concise prose.
- Students will follow Associated Press style and accepted story formats.

- Students will make accuracy, fairness and ethical behavior hallmarks of the work.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications, as well as an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance of mass communications in a global society.

Objective:

- Students will include in their stories and papers material that addresses diverse perspectives and demonstrates an appreciation of the many forms of domestic diversity.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to locate, interview, generate and accurately report useful information from appropriate live sources.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to gather and evaluate in-depth information from diverse, field-appropriate books, journals, databases and Internet sources.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

- Students will demonstrate the ability to produce news stories, public relations materials or media analyses that are clear, accurate, thorough, cogent and fair.

Department Objectives:

- Students will develop accurate and fair news stories across a variety of journalistic media.

Attendance

You are responsible for coming to class. Emergencies do arise. Therefore, each student is permitted one unexcused absence during the semester. Any additional absences will result in a drop of one-third of a point in your final grade. More than two absences will result in your grade being lowered a full grade. The only exceptions are absences pre-approved by the instructor because of genuine emergencies, and medical absences accompanied by a doctor's note for each absent day. In the case of a death in the family, students will be required to present a signed, dated confirmation from the funeral home or a published obituary.

Arriving at class after attendance is taken is considered an absence.

Absences are not an excuse for late work. Even if you are absent, you are expected to hand in work on time. Pop quizzes, news quizzes and style quizzes

cannot be made up.

Services for Students with Disabilities

If you have any documented disability-related concerns that may have an impact upon your performance in this course, please meet with me within the first two weeks of the current semester so that we can work out the appropriate accommodations. Arrangements and modifications will be made on an individual basis after an evaluation of the needs and circumstances by the appropriate office on campus and all relevant documentation has been submitted.

For more information on services provided by Hofstra, and for submission of documentation of your disability, please contact:

Services for Students with Disabilities
212 Memorial Hall
(516) 463-7075

All disability-related information will be kept confidential.

INC (Incomplete): When requested by the student, the instructor may grant, at her/his discretion, a grade of Incomplete ('I'). An 'I' grade should be given only when unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from completing course work on time. As part of the normal final-grade process, the instructor must submit an 'I' grade on-line to the Office of Academic Records with a default grade, the grade the student will receive if the missing work is not completed. The instructor will decide the time frame in which the student will complete the required course work. However, the deadline may not exceed the last day of the next full semester following the granting of an 'I' grade. Please refer to the online bulletin of undergraduate grades for the entire University policy and procedure for incomplete grades.

Academic Honesty:

Hofstra University places high value upon educating students about academic honesty. At the same time, the University will not tolerate dishonesty, and it will not offer the privileges of the community to the repeat offender.

It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. If you don't understand what plagiarism is and how you can avoid it, you have options. For further information about policies and procedures concerning violations of academic honesty, consult Faculty Policy Series # 11 in Hofstra's Guide to Pride and at the University Senate Web site (http://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/Faculty/Senate/senate_FPS_11.pdf). I also encourage students to take advantage of structured opportunities to learn about academic honesty such as the Writing Center.

If I have reason to believe you have plagiarized or engaged in any academically dishonest activity, you will fail the course and be reported to the Provost's Office and Dean of Students.

Distinguished Speakers

Each semester, the Department of Journalism, Media Studies and Public Relations invites prominent journalists to speak at the School of Communication. Journalism majors are required to attend these lectures, which take place around campus. Dates for the spring 2016 semester will be announced as they are scheduled.

Deadlines

Reporters must meet deadlines. Nothing is more useless than a piece on a breaking story two days after it happened. The internet is merciless---information is put online almost as fast as it happens--- and late copy misses the paper and gets no hits. Assignments one week late drop one grade. Assignments received after that are F, and will not be read.

Assignments are due at the start of class on the date listed on the syllabus. Readings for each day should be completed before class.

Accuracy

All stories must be entirely accurate. All quotes must be exact. Names must be spelled correctly. If you are not sure, go back and check. Then check again. Any story with a major error or misspelled name, anything that would require a published correction, automatically receives an F. Grammar, spelling or usage

errors cost one point each. All copy will be given two grades: one for reporting, one for writing. These will be blended for the total grade.

Integrity

In addition to the general warning about plagiarism above, the honesty and integrity of the reporter is the foundation of journalism. Credibility is our stock in trade. Dishonesty will not be tolerated in any newsroom. Fabricating quotes or sources will result in an F for the course. Reporters and editors have been fired for such offenses. Handing in work that is not original will result in expulsion from the course, and, perhaps, the University. **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.**

Class Participation

Reporters need to be active. They need to develop a sense of skepticism. They need to ask questions and challenge what they are told. Practice these skills in class. Even professors screw up. THERE ARE NO STUPID QUESTIONS.

Weekly Quizzes

There will be short quizzes each week.

The first day we will do grammar/spelling/usage exercises.

The second day there will be a news quiz consisting of 10 questions based on events of the previous week, taken from The New York Times. The quiz will take the first 25 minutes of the class. There will be a mock quiz---the grade doesn't count---the week before the first quiz.

Exams

There is no midterm and no final. The only formal exams are the news quizzes.

Reading

Most reporters read several newspapers and websites a day. The more you read the better a journalist you'll become. Read everything you can get your hands on, online or in print – newspapers, magazines, books, journals, press releases, blogs and websites. At the very minimum, you are required to purchase and read the following:

WRITING AND REPORTING THE NEWS, A Coaching Method, eighth edition, by Carole Rich, Wadsworth Publishing Co. E-book (Mindtap). The text is completely online. You don't need the soft-cover text, but it will be available at the bookstore. How to access Mindtap:

- Connect to <https://login.cengagebrain.com/course/MTPP-NZ7P-GHFC>
Follow the prompts to register your MindTap course.

ASSOCIATED PRESS Stylebook. You should bring this to class each day. In addition, there is an AP app for smartphones. It costs \$24.99, but is well worth it.

THE NEW YORK TIMES. It's not the easiest paper to read, but it is a must for any reporter in the New York area. You are required to read the Times every weekday and will be quizzed on the contents each week. There are free copies of the Times on campus every weekday morning. The Times is available online for subscribers (nytimes.com), but quizzes will be based on the print edition.

Materials

You need an e-mail account. Hofstra provides all students with an account but you may use any e-mail provider. You must check your e-mail daily. Most of your work will be done online, and transmitted by email or on Blackboard.

Rewrite policy: You may be permitted to rewrite selected assignments to improve your grade and the quality of your work. Rewrites are due one week after the first versions are returned. Rewrites that only incorporate the teacher's corrections will not count. In-class assignments, style quizzes, and basic textbook assignments may not be redone.

Grading criteria: Your work will be evaluated according to its publishable quality. The criteria are as follows:

A = Outstanding. Publishable quality. Excellent content, ideas, writing, reporting and adherence to AP style.

B= Very good. Publishable with minor changes. Good content, reporting and writing skills and adherence to AP style.

C= Average. Requires substantial changes (additional information gathering or major rewriting including correction of numerous style errors).

D= Poor. Assignment had fundamental problems – weak content, serious writing flaws.

F= Unacceptable for any of these reasons: late, inaccurate, incomprehensible, factual errors or misspelled names. Plagiarism automatically results in an F.

Grading percentages:

Class assignments and short stories: (grades averaged): 25%

News and pop quizzes (grades averaged): 25%

Outside stories (grades averaged): 50%

NO FINAL

Coaching Conferences:

I will meet with you halfway through the semester for coaching and critiquing of your work. Keep all your work in a folder so I can evaluate your work at our conference. You may schedule an appointment at any time for additional coaching.

Schedule

The following schedule is approximate and may be altered to accommodate the needs and interests of students and events in the news.

Week 1

Tuesday, Jan. 26

Introductions: to me, to you, to the course, to the lab. Carl Corry press conference, 400 words, due at end of class. Slug: JRNL11CPRESS26
Reading: Rich Ch. 1, Changing Concepts of News

Thursday, Jan. 28

Review press conference papers.
State of the media today: Revolutionary times
The web; Social media; Twitter; Facebook; blogs; cell phones; YouTube;
History of news
The First Amendment
The role of the reporter.
About story budgets, slugs
In class exercise: biographies; Slug: JRNL11CBIO28
Reading: Rich Ch. 2, The Basic News Story

Bring style book to class every day!

Week 2

Tuesday, Feb. 2

Go over biographies

About the stylebook. Style on numbers.
News writing style.
Ledes.
Reading: Rich Ch. 7, Leads and Nut Grafts
Homework: Be Specific; Slug: JRNL11CSPECIFIC02

Thursday, Feb. 4 (Day 3)

Week 3

Tuesday, Feb. 9

Review Be Specific
(Research resources: visit from Prof. Singh of the library---tentative)

What is news?

Thursday, Feb. 11

Mock news quiz. JRNL011CMOCK11
(First quiz that counts is Thursday, Feb. 18)
More on ledes, news values.
slug: JRNL11CCRIME11

Week 4

Tuesday, Feb. 16

IN RECOGNITION OF PRESIDENTS DAY, NO CLASSES

Thursday, Feb. 18

Review crime stories
Student Tasered at Florida; in class. Slug: JRNL11CTASE23
News quiz; slug: JRNL11CQUIZ18
Read: Rich, Ch. 8, Story Organization

Week 5

Tuesday, Feb. 25

How to find stories; curiosity
Homework: four campus buildings; slug: JRNL11CHOF25

Thursday, Feb. 27

More on ledes, story structure, observation, attribution
News quiz; slug: JRNL11CQUIZ27
Homework: Rich. P. 148, Nos. 1 a b c; 3 a b; 4; 5; 6 a OR b
Slug: JRNL11CLEDES27

Week 6

Tuesday, March 1

More on ledes, story structure, observation, attribution.

Blogs;

Interviews;

Homework: Interview to explain; slug: JRNL11CHOWTO01

Thursday, March 3

Guest speaker TBD

Week 7

Tuesday, March 8

Status of explainers;

Interviews and note taking.

Begin Hofstra story, budget notes

Read Rich Ch. 5, Interviewing techniques.

Thursday, March 10

News quiz: JRNL011CQUIZ10

Quotes

Blogs

Story structure

More on Hofstra story

Rough draft due Tuesday 3/15; slug: JRNL11CHOF15

Reading: Rich Ch. 9, Story forms

Week 8 (Oct. 19, 21)

Tuesday, March 15

Hofstra story rough draft due

Finding sources; on and off the record; FOIA

More about blogs, other online info

Data search during class

Thursday, March 17

News quiz: JRNL11AQUIZ21

Finding sources; on and off the record; FOIA

Math for journalists

Hofstra final story due Tuesday, March 21

Week 9

Tuesday, March 21

Attribution
Libel and media law
Read: Rich Ch. 14: Media Law

Thursday, March 23

News quiz JRNL11CQUIZ23
Midterm conferences
Libel; ethics.
Due next week: Personal profile rough draft: JRNL011CXXX
Reading: Ch. 20, Crime and Punishment

Week 10 (March 28, 30)

SPRING RECESS, NO CLASSES

Week 11

Tuesday, April 5

Personal profile rough draft due
Crime, courts
Everyone is a story
Begin thinking about town profile

Thursday, April 7

News quiz slug JRNL011CQUIZ07
Disaster, weather, tragedy
Building sources, getting information

Week 12

Tuesday, April 12

Personal profile final due today
Media ethics, plagiarism, piping quotes, ethical dilemmas.

Thursday, April 14

News quiz: JRNL011A14
Diversity: What is a minority group.
Language
Town profile budget

Week 13 (Nov. 16, 18)

Tuesday, April 19

Town profile rough draft due Tuesday, March 26

Thursday, April 21

News quiz: JRNL011CQUIZ21

Week 13**Tuesday, April 26**

Town profile rough draft due
Begin "All the President's Men"

Thursday, April 28

No quiz
Finish "All the President's Men"

Week 14**Tuesday, May 3**

Editorials, columns, opinion, letters
Breslin's "Gravedigger"
NYTimes columnists; NYPost columnists
Drudge report; Huffington Post; ProPublica
Hometown final due May 5

Thursday, May 5

News quiz JRNL011AQUIZ02
Specialty beats: education, science, health, business
Hometown final due today

Week 15**Tuesday, May 9**

Catching up loose ends

Thursday, May 11**LAST DAY OF CLASS**

NO QUIZ!

Problems, future of journalism

END NOTE

Many of you have never written a news story before, never used a style guide, never conducted an interview, and perhaps never read a newspaper. You will be learning a style of writing you have never had before. You will learn all these skills over the course of the semester, but at first you are apt to feel overwhelmed. Work hard, hang in there and, please, ASK FOR HELP. THERE ARE NO STUPID QUESTIONS. If you are having trouble finding a source or

writing a lede, please tell me. If you let me know you are having a problem, I can help you solve it. If I don't find out until the story is due, it's too late. So please: Call me. E-mail me. I want you to succeed. I want you to learn to love this profession as much as I do.