

The Ohio State University - School of Communication
Communication 2321 – Writing for Strategic Communication

Autumn 2016

MEETING TIMES: T/TH 12:45-2:05 p.m. in Journalism 224 - Section 13918

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Stovall, J. (2015). *Writing for the Mass Media* (9th ed.) Pearson. ISBN 978-0-13-386327-7
- *The Associated Press Stylebook 2015 or 2016*. The Associated Press.
- Recommend reading *The Columbus Dispatch* and *The Lantern*. Also bookmark online versions of *The Washington Post*, *NY Times*, *USA Today* and CNN to best prepare for news quizzes. Follow @DispatchAlerts, @TheLantern and @AP on Twitter.

INSTRUCTOR: Alyson Moses, M.A.

OFFICE: Journalism 315 **Tuesday/Thursday** 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or by appointment

moses.126@osu.edu

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Learning to write factually, concisely and on deadline takes practice. The more you do it, the better and faster you become. This high-intensity course is designed to prepare you for the deadlines and forms of writing required in a professional environment. You will typically have an assignment due every class period. Multiple writing opportunities spanning print, broadcast, social media, Web and public relations will be incorporated into the assignments.

Class time will include discussion on current news, interactive lectures, timed quizzes and writing assignments. I will offer lab time to begin some assignments during class, giving you the opportunity to ask questions as you learn new styles of writing. Lab time is not an excuse to leave early, it's your chance to get guidance on assignments. I will not answer questions on homework via email, so be sure you understand each assignment at the onset.

COURSE GOALS:

- Learn fundamental concepts of news gathering and news writing
- Prepare to write factually, concisely and effectively
- Develop proficiency in Associated Press Stylebook rules and application
- Gain command of basic writing for the Web and social media
- Prepare for writing and copyediting tests required by most employers

GRADING SCALE:

A	93-100%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	60-66%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	E	Below 60%
B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%		

EVALUATION:

Participation/Variable Points 35 points (9 percent)

- News discussions
- In-class assignments/
news quizzes

AP Style Quizzes 100 points (25 percent)

- Best five of six
- 20 points each

Tight Deadline Writing 150 points (37.5 percent)

Writing Assignments 65 points (16 percent)

Final Exam 50 points (12.5 percent)

Total Possible Points **400 points (100 percent)**

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

All written assignments should be typed and formatted in Arial 11-point font and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Assignments should be turned in hardcopy at the start of class, unless otherwise instructed. Assignments must be stapled, otherwise points will be deducted. All assignments should follow AP style guidelines.

Participation

Earn participation points by coming to class, participating in discussions and in-class work, and preparing for in-class news quizzes. I will take attendance at some point during every class and assignments completed in class cannot be made up. Points will be deducted for anyone making disrespectful comments about another person or idea. Avoid using the Internet, playing computer games and sending non-course related email during class unless otherwise instructed. Points will be deducted from your participation grade if you are observed doing these things.

News discussions and/or quizzes will be part of every class and part of your participation grade. Writing for mass media requires news savvy, keen observation skills and the ability to interact effectively with sources and other journalists. Strong news-reading habits will help you develop a sense of stories worth publishing as well as writing dos and don'ts. Skim recommended news websites daily to prepare.

AP Style Quizzes

For many careers involving writing or editing, a solid understanding of Associated Press (AP) style is required. This class includes six AP style quizzes; your top five scores will count toward your grade.

Tight Deadline Writing

Writing for the media often involves finding sources and writing solid content on a short deadline. When a source doesn't return your call, or when an event ends at 10 p.m. and your story must be filed by midnight, it takes quick-thinking and problem solving to get the job done. **There will be six writing assignments given in class that are due the next class period. A running list of due dates will be available on Carmen.** If you are absent the day an assignment is given, ask a classmate or see me during my office hours for the assignment. There is no flexibility on set deadlines. You may turn in assignment early, but NOT late.

Writing Assignments

Feature Story Assignment

As a writer or public relations practitioner, you will face assignments with longer deadlines that involve greater planning and research. As part of this course you will write a feature story on a subject you choose and I approve. The goal is for the finished product to merit a spot in *The Lantern* or another media outlet.

Your feature assignment requires two personal sources, and one information source for a total of three sources. You must provide a source contact list with phone numbers and emails of your personal sources. I will contact some of these sources to fact check throughout the semester.

Press Release

You will create a press release, choosing from several topics provided by me. After revisions, the final version of the press release will be submitted for grading, along with a separate sheet listing five tweets that complement and support the press release.

Final Exam

The final exam will evaluate your understanding of the course material. It may include multiple choice, true/false, fill-in, short and long answer. A study guide will be provided.

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance and Late Policy

In an internship or job, attendance is expected and missing a day of work can cost you income and damage your personal brand. All absences, regardless of the reason, count the same. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. **You will lose participation points each time you miss a class. And missing more than two classes throughout the semester will result in the loss of a full letter grade. In-class assignments and quizzes cannot be made up.**

Deadlines

When writing for the media, missing a deadline equals blank space to fill in a newspaper (and an angry editor), a lost radio or television spot (and some big bucks) or an unhappy client who is unwilling to pay you or use you again for public relations representation. Assignments must be completed on time or they will not be accepted. **I do not accept late work.**

Under no circumstances are assignments accepted via email unless explicitly stated otherwise. If you are absent the day an assignment is handed back, it is your responsibility to pick up your assignment from my office. Personal computer and/or printer problems are not valid excuses. Save early and save often. There are state-of-the-art computer labs throughout campus, some of which are open 24 hours a day: <http://lt.osu.edu/locations-hours>.

COURSE RULES:

1. As a courtesy to me and your peers, please silence cell phones before class and put them away. I will give express permission if and when cell phone use is warranted for class discussion.

2. Computers are a valuable tool in this course, but please do not let them become a distraction by doing non-class related searches or activities during class.
3. Be on time and prepared, complete assignments on time, have a good attitude and participate. You can expect the same from me.

COMMUNICATION:

I will notify you of any reminders, schedule changes, other updates, etc. by Carmen and email, so check your email frequently. Email is a professional obligation. The best way to contact me is through email at moses.126@osu.edu.

CARMEN:

I will post course information, handouts, optional worksheets and notes on Carmen. Your grades also will be posted on Carmen. You have one week after grades are posted to inquire about a missing grade or a grade you believe to be incorrect.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION DIVERSITY STATEMENT:

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Cheating and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3325-23-04) defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the university's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so I recommend you review the *Code of Student Conduct*, specifically the sections dealing with academic misconduct at studentaffairs.osu.edu/resources_csc.asp. If I suspect a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). If COAM determines you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, **the sanctions for misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University**. If you have questions about this policy or what constitutes academic misconduct, please contact me or visit COAM at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html>.

REASONABLE ACCOMODATION POLICY:

Students with disabilities who have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform me as soon as possible of their needs. When possible, documentation should be provided no later than the second week of class. The Office for Disability Services is located in

150 Pomerane Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; Phone 292-3307; TDD 292-0901; www.ods.ohio-state.edu.

DISCLAIMER:

I reserve the right to alter scheduled topics as the semester progresses. Any changes will be announced in class.

TENTATIVE AUTUMN SEMESTER 2016 SCHEDULE

Tuesday/Thursday Class

Week	Date	Topic	Chapter	Due
1	8/23 8/25	Introductions Review Syllabus Intro to writing – Academic vs. Media Writing	Stovall Ch. 1 & 2	
2	8/30 9/1	Basic tools of writing	Pg. 301 AP Stylebook	Personal Media Audit (Tues.) Bring AP Stylebook to class
3	9/6 9/8	Style and the AP Stylebook	Stovall Ch. 3 AP Stylebook	Bring AP Stylebook to class
4	9/13 9/15	News and news value Writing in the Media Environment	Stovall Ch. 4	<i>Tight deadline assignment #1 (Thurs.)</i>
5	9/20 9/22	Newswriting – Headlines and Leads Newswriting – Body	Stovall Ch. 5	AP Style Quiz #1 (Thurs.)
6	9/27 9/29	Newswriting Cont. Lab – TD#3 Newswriting Finale	Stovall Ch. 5	<i>Tight deadline assignment #2 (Thurs.)</i>
7	10/4	Features Stories Lab – Feature vs. news leads	Stovall Ch. 7	<i>Tight deadline assignment #3 (Tues.)</i>

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	10/6	Feature stories cont. Lab – TD #4		AP Style Quiz #2 (Thurs.)
8	10/11 10/13	Feature finale Lab: Feature assignment NO CLASS THURSDAY – FALL BREAK	Stovall Ch. 7	<i>Tight deadline assignment #4 (Tues.)</i>
9	10/18 10/20	PR writing – News Releases, Headlines	Stovall Ch. 12	AP Style Quiz #3 (Thurs.) <i>Tight deadline assignment #5 (Thurs.)</i>
10	10/25 10/27	PR writing – Press Kit Materials Writing for social media	Stovall Ch. 12	AP Style Quiz #4 (Thurs.)
11	11/1 11/3	PR pitching Writing for the Web	Stovall Ch. 10	<i>Press release and tweets (Tues.)</i> AP Style Quiz #5 (Thurs.) <i>Tight deadline assignment #6 (Thurs.)</i>
12	11/8 11/10	Writing for broadcast Guidelines for broadcast style writing PSA Exercise	Stovall Ch. 9	Feature story (Thurs.)
13	11/15 11/17	Advertising Writing Law and Ethics Getting a Job/Review for Final	Stovall Ch. 11 and 13	AP Style Quiz #6 (Tues.)
14	11/22 11/24	NO CLASS – Employer writing test via Carmen NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break		
15	11/29 12/1	Getting a Job/Review for Final AP Style Review Trivia	Stovall Ch. 14	
16	12/6	Final/Class Recap		

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Final Exam Block	12/13 2-3:45 p.m.	Format of exam slot TBA		
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