

COMM 2321: Writing for Strategic Communication

Fall 2018

Instructor: Mary Sterenberg, M.S.

Office: JR 311

Office Hours: Mon. 9:30-11:30 a.m., Wed. 1:30-2:30 p.m., Friday 12:30-1:30

p.m., by appointment

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Tues/Thurs 12:45 – 2:05 p.m. Journalism Building Room 224 – Section 6361

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Learning to write factually, concisely and on deadline takes practice. The more you do it, the better and faster you become. This is a high-intensity course designed to prepare you for the deadlines and forms of writing required in a professional environment. Opportunities for writing a variety of types of copy for print, broadcast media, web and public relations will be incorporated into the assignments. This course also will give you an appreciation for the importance of being a strong editor and giving constructive feedback to other writers.

Class time will include discussion on current news, interactive lectures, timed quizzes and writing assignments. I will give time to begin some assignments during class, giving you the opportunity to ask questions as you learn new styles of writing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Learn fundamental concepts of news gathering and news writing and understand how these translate into other professional areas of communication
- Strengthen ability to write factually, concisely and effectively, and to help others do the same through strong editing
- Develop proficiency in Associate Press Stylebook rules and application
- Improve ability to effectively manage time, balance multiple tasks and meet deadlines
- Prepare for writing and copyediting tests required by most employers

COURSE TEXTS

- Writing for Strategic Communication Industries, Jasmine Roberts, <https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/stratcommwriting/> (This is a no-cost online textbook)
- The Associated Press Stylebook 2018. The Associated Press.
- Recommended: The Columbus Dispatch, The Lantern, The Skimm (sign up for free email updates)

COURSE GRADING SCALE

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

COURSE EVALUATION

<u>Reading Assignments</u>	<u>40 points</u>
<u>Skills Assignments</u>	<u>90 points</u>
<u>Writing Assignments</u>	<u>120 points</u>
<u>AP Style Quizzes</u>	<u>100 points (25%)</u>
• Best five of six	
• 20 points each	
<u>Exam</u>	<u>50 points</u>
Total Possible Points	400 points

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should follow AP style guidelines. Save early and save often. **If you are absent the day an assignment is given, ask a classmate or come see me during my office hours for the assignment. There is no flexibility on set deadlines, as this course focuses on deadline-based writing.**

Reading Assignments

It's crucial to complete assigned readings before coming to class to maximize our classroom time for discussions, writing assignments and peer editing. Students will complete reading assignments individually on Carmen before class so that we are ready to apply the lessons. Due dates are on the syllabus and students are responsible for completing reading assignments by the due dates. There are no makeups for missed deadlines.

Skills Assignments

These assignments include 5-10-point news discussions/quizzes and writing assignments designed to help you learn and practice the writing techniques needed for longer Writing Assignments. Writing for the different forms of mass media requires news savvy, keen observation skills and the ability to interact effectively with sources and other journalists. Strong news-reading habits – and there are MANY ways to consume news in the current media environment – will help you develop a sense of stories worth publishing as well as writing dos and don'ts. Beyond the writing, the ability to be a keen editor of your own work and others' writing is crucial. Many classes will include an in-class assignment, or a brief assignment due the following class period. **SKILLS ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE THE SAME DAY OR THE NEXT CLASS PERIOD AS NOTED IN CLASS. THEY ARE NOT LISTED ON THE SYLLABUS.**

Writing Assignments

In this course you learn to write in a new way that is very different from academic writing. Writing must be concise, accurate and conform to newswriting and AP style – and it must be done quickly. 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. On the flip side, articles with longer deadlines come with the expectation of more sources, greater planning and research, and additional content. **ALL CLASS ASSIGNMENTS THAT INCLUDE SOURCES MUST INCLUDE A CONTACT LIST WITH PHONE NUMBERS AND EMAILS FOR YOUR SOURCES. I WILL CONTACT SOME OF THESE SOURCES THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER.** The goal is for the finished product to merit a spot in *The Lantern* or other media outlet.

AP Style Quizzes

For many careers involving writing or editing, a solid understanding of how to use the Associated Press Stylebook and AP style rules is fundamental. This class includes six AP style quizzes, with the top five scores counted.

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.

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 likely lose participation points each time you miss a class. **After the equivalent of one week of missed classes, 5 points will be deducted from your final grade for each class you miss thereafter. In-class assignments cannot be made up. If you are absent a day an assignment is discussed or assigned, it is your responsibility.**

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 unwilling to pay you or use you again for public relations representation. Assignments in this course must be completed on time or they will not be accepted. **There is no flexibility on set deadlines and I do not accept late work.**

If you will be absent the day an assignment is discussed or due, see me in my office for assignment details and turn it in early in class or in my office. Keep in mind that I do not accept late work, so contact me before an assignment is due. 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. I will not bring it with me to class. Personal computer and/or printer problems are not valid excuses. There are computer labs throughout campus, some of which are open 24 hours a day: <http://lt.osu.edu/locations-hours>.

Class Rules

1. 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.
2. Be prepared and on time, 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 email, so check your email frequently. Email is a professional obligation. The best way to contact me is through email at sterenberg.2@osu.edu. For email, please include COMM 2321 in the subject line to ensure your email receives high priority in my inbox.

CARMEN

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

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

Requesting accommodations

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know via email immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu ; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu ; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

DISCLAIMER

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

Comm 2321: Writing for Strategic Communication
Fall 2018

Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Readings (complete by day indicated)	Assignment Due
1	8/21 8/23	Intro to course/Academic vs. Media Writing Media consumption/ Basics of writing	Review syllabus Ch. 1	
2	8/28 8/30	Basics of writing Style and the AP Stylebook	Ch. 2	Reading Quiz Ch. 2 (closes noon 8/28)
3	9/4 9/6	Learning AP Style News/news value	Ch. 4	Reading quiz Ch 4 (closes noon 9/6)
4	9/11 9/13	Interviewing/Gathering facts Newswriting – Headlines, Leads	Ch. 5	Reading quiz Ch 5 (closes noon 9/11) AP Style Quiz #1 (9/13)
5	9/18 9/20	Newswriting - Body Newswriting – Putting it Together		AP Style Quiz #2 (9/20)
6	9/25 9/27	Writing on deadline News story advanced		AP Style Quiz #3 (9/27)
7	10/2 10/4	Editing and rewriting Law & Ethics	Ch. 3	Writing Assignment: News story; submission 10/2, Carmen peer evaluation 10/4 Reading Quiz Ch 3 (closes noon 10/4)
8	10/9 10/11	Features/Feature Leads FALL BREAK	Ch. 6	Reading quiz Ch 6 (closes noon 10/9)
9	10/16 10/18	Features Feature article workshops		AP Style Quiz #4 (10/16)
10	10/23 10/25	Feature article workshops PR industry/writing	Ch. 7	Writing Assignment: Feature Article (submission 10/24, Carmen peer evaluation closes noon 10/30) Reading quiz Ch 7 (closes noon 10/25)
11	10/30 11/1	GUEST SPEAKER (tentative) Pitching/working with reporters	Ch. 8	Reading quiz Ch 8 (closes noon 11/1)

Comm 2321: Writing for Strategic Communication
 Fall 2018

12	11/6 11/8	PR writing: news releases PR writing: other PR Tactics	Ch. 9	Reading quiz Ch 9 (closes noon 11/6) AP Style Quiz #5 (11/8)
13	11/13 11/15	Writing for broadcast Media kit workshops		AP Style Quiz #6 (11/13)
14	11/20 11/22	Media kit workshops THANKSGIVING		Writing Assignment: Media Kit (11/21)
15	11/27 11/29	Writing for the web Getting a job/employer writing test sample		
16	12/4	Bringing it all together		