

The Lantern Practicum

COMM2223

M 2:15 - 4:05 pm (216 Journalism Bldg.)

T/Th 2:20 - 3:40pm (216 Journalism Bldg.)

Autumn 2021

Office: 275 Journalism Building

Lantern office phone: 614.247.7030

Lantern office hours:

Monday 10am -1pm

(or by appointment)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to *The Lantern!*

You are now part of an Ohio State institution that got its start in 1881. That means this class will not be like any other you've had. Why? You are a reporter for *The Lantern*. In this class, your work gets published, and that's an exciting thing.

In many ways, this class will function like a real newsroom. That's because *The Lantern*, is a digital news organization that has an international audience. You will operate and contribute to that, so we have to work in this class in a way that works in the world.

You will produce polished and professional Arts, Campus and Sports stories for *The Lantern's* website, its social media channels and the newspaper it prints once weekly. You will develop your reporting and writing skills through the only real way it can be taught - by doing it. And you will further your multimedia and video reporting skills.

You will have at least 14 published articles by the end of the semester. Many of you will have more.

You will build on the skills you acquired in COMM 2221 to cover the Ohio State campus. You will interview real people, develop expertise within your beats, write stories, take photos and video and meet deadlines.

That means writing clear, concise, original and accurate articles, producing strong photos and multimedia pieces, and acting professionally and ethically as a journalist.

COURSE GOALS

By the time this class is over, you will know how to:

1. Report, write and produce various types of stories for *The Lantern*.
2. Understand the rigors and logistics of media work and the work required to produce quality journalism.
3. Use multimedia and produce content beyond words on a page.

READINGS

Online links provided through Canvas.

All readings should be done prior to the assigned class period. You should note the difference between “Read” and “Resources” in Canvas. Resources are helpful, but they are not required reading.

To best prepare for this class and writing exercises, read the online versions of *The Lantern*, *Columbus Dispatch*, *The Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *CNN*, and scan *Google News*.

Refer, constantly, to the Associated Press and Lantern style books. This is important as these are the writing rules every working professional journalist must follow. AP represents the universal rules. The Lantern style governs situations specific to Ohio State, students, faculty and issues specific to this university.

This gets said in every journalism class: Read as much as you can from as many different sources as you can. It’s helpful in this class, because as a reporter and writer, you get better when you read superior work on similar stories.

GRADING

Final course grades will be calculated in the following way:

- **Professionalism (50 points)**
- **Writing exercises (100 points)**
- **Editor feedback on your work (50 points)**
- **Multimedia: video and photo work (100)**
- **14 articles (50 points each = 700 points)**

These points tallied together will give you your final grade of the following percentages (100-93=A; 92-90=A-; 89-88=B+; 87-82=B; 81--80=B-; 79-78=C+; 77-72=C; 71--70=C--; 69-60=D; 59 - below=E).

Please Note: I am not able to negotiate grades, either during or after the semester. I do not round up. This means if you have a B+, you’ve earned it.

INSTRUCTOR METHODS

This course is focused on improving your writing and reporting skills. So, as much as possible, this course will be focused on those “hands on” experiences that are designed to help you realize those two goals.

There is no textbook, but there is material that I will expect each of you to read through before class. Classes will include lectures and discussions designed to reinforce those points. The Monday labs will feature guest talks from subject matter experts, hands-on sessions with equipment and weekly news meetings with Lantern editors.

I will send emails as reminders for upcoming class topics, trips and deadlines. Please make sure you see and read these emails. If not, let me know ASAP.

My goal is to improve your reporting, your writing, and to help you achieve your academic and career goals. I am committed to this because I believe this is an important and valuable skill to develop, regardless of your post college plans. I encourage you to email and tweet any and all questions that arise, to share information you discover outside our class content, and to meet with me during office hours or beyond.

Where office hours are concerned, I have them listed at the top of the syllabus, but in general I am in the news room by 8 a.m, and, if I’m not in class, I’m typically there until at least 5 p.m. If the office door is open, walk in.

CLASS TOOLS

You will be expected to access readings and course materials through links I’ve set up in Canvas. Please let me know if you’re having any issues accessing them and we’ll get those problems corrected.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Not all classes fit your schedule or your academic plan, and I understand that. Please know, however, that I very much wish to meet with you before you drop (especially the deeper we get into the semester) to see what we can do to work through any challenges together. If you do have questions about how to drop or the impact on your transcript or financial aid, please visit the Academic Advising website.

ASSIGNMENTS

Professionalism (50 points)

We don't take attendance in this class. If you miss a lecture, I'll notice and expect to know why. Just as important is your attendance at weekly planning sessions, and regular communication, with Lantern editors. While working on your articles, you represent The Lantern. Any conduct unbecoming your role and responsibilities will impact this grade. This conduct includes following the SPJ code of ethics, which you will find in Module 1-1 of Carmen. It is one of your first required readings.

Writing Exercises (100 points)

We will have a writing exercise each week that will put your deadline writing skills to the test and improve them. Each writing exercise, 10 in all, will be based off actual press releases, statements – even social media posts - and you will be asked to produce the first three paragraphs of the story you would publish on the Lantern's website. The exercise is intended to simulate a real-life experience of writing under deadline.

Editor Feedback on your work (50 points)

The Lantern editors you work with will provide an evaluation of your performance (timeliness, willingness to rewrite, quality of story ideas, receptiveness to constructive comments, etc.) A part of this grade is also attendance at weekly editor meetings. At least five points of your editor grade will be deducted if you fail to attend at least one meeting with your editors as they go through your story.

Multimedia: Photo work (50 points)

Most stories are made more compelling by a photo, graphic or other image. For every article you create, you will need to shoot or submit at least one photo **OR** help coordinate photo or video assignments with your Lantern editor. This is an all or nothing grade – include these elements in every article you submit, and you will receive the points.

Multimedia: Video work (50 points)

You will produce two videos for this class. There will be a hands on session to teach the basics of video capture and editing. Before the midterm of the semester you will produce a video package with the help of Lantern TV video directors, who will accompany and walk you through the process. Completion of this will be worth 15 points toward your final grade. By the end of the semester you will produce your own video package, which you will shoot and edit yourself. This will be worth 35 points and will be graded according to standards of completeness, which will be shared in a rubric in Carmen.

To make sure you get these points, include the photos along with your story in your Carmen assignments. For video points, please file the videos within the Video 1 and Video 2 assignments in Carmen. If you help arrange that photos are taken of the event for you or provided with your sports story, note that you have done that, so that I can confirm it with your editor.

Articles (14 articles @ 50 points each = 700 points)

You are responsible for developing 14 story ideas/assignments into articles for *The Lantern*. Unlike COMM 2221, where your goal was submission for a grade, your goal now is publication, and that means each article must achieve one of three levels before it will be graded:

1. The article is good enough for publication (as per a Lantern editor) and gets published.
2. The article is good enough for publication (as per a Lantern editor) and does not get published.
3. A Lantern editor deems the article not worthy of publication.

This means that articles may go through numerous revisions before they are finished, or they may be good to go on your first try.

DEADLINES – IMPORTANT!

Your lantern section editor will work with you to establish a deadline for each of your stories so that they will be ready for publication. So this is not like a class, in which a late submitted story earns a lower grade. Deadlines must be met.

When you file your story with your editor, file a copy of that story to the appropriately numbered class Carmen assignment in Canvas. Each of you will have 14 separate Carmen assignments in which to file your stories.

IMPORTANT. If you do not file the story in the Carmen assignment when you file the story with your editor, you will lose five points from the story. Stories handed in to the Carmen assignment days after publication will receive this point deduction.

There are 16 weeks in this semester and you will need to write at least 14

stories, so while you can go a week without filing a story, that will mean you need to write two stories the next week, and so on. That's why it's important to report, write and file at least one story a week. Students that don't can quickly find themselves in a bind.

This is really important: Any assignments that don't meet deadline will receive **zero points**. You don't want to have this problem. This is why it's critical to stay in touch with your editors and let them know of any issues as soon as they crop up. Your editors might be able to offer a suggestion that gets you back on track. Staying in touch and working out realistic deadlines with your editors will help you avoid issues that can really hurt your grade.

Why zero points? Deadlines are critically important in the news business. When you agree to do a story, you agree to meet that deadline. Missing deadlines creates a hole in a paper or a website that your editors were counting on you to fill. So you need to manage your time, and give yourself as much of it as you need to report, write self-edit and hand in your stories.

Submission Guidelines

All stories will be submitted to Carmen assignment as follows, or they won't get graded: *Name the file (this is called a "slug") with this information: LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, ASSIGNMENT NAME, DATE*

2. Save the file as Word document.
3. Put the file in your FOLDER on CARMEN ASSIGNMENT

Include in the body of each article:

- YOUR NAME
- SUGGESTED HEADLINE
- CONTACT LIST with phone numbers and/or email for your sources, so I can touch base during the semester.

Failure to include any of these items will result in a five point deduction (up to 15 points)

ARTICLES:

- You will be working a "beat" at *The Lantern*, with the goal of developing expertise, relationships with sources and a deeper understanding of issues.
- You are the master of your own story idea domain. *That means most of the ideas will be generated by you.* Some assignments will come from *Lantern* editors.
- You must have *at least two* human sources, but, more importantly, you must have sources that have expertise to speak on your article topic. Many stories would benefit from having more than two sources, so keep this in mind as you are reporting and writing a story that would satisfy editors and readers.

- ❑ **Opinion/Reviews** First-person reviews of concerts and events have a place in *The Lantern* but they do not in this class. I cannot grade you as a reporter if you are your only source. Similarly, concert reviews with two sources/audience members stuck at the end will not do well in this class. You can, however, preview a concert or event, with the expectation that the sources will be the event organizers and the performers or their representatives.
- ❑ You get to write three of your 14 articles for a section other than the one you are assigned. (The pandemic may create situations that force us to relax or abandon this requirement.)
- ❑ If you find a great story idea for someone else's beat, do not be afraid to share. Collaboration is a key to newsroom success and will earn you extra credit.
- ❑ We will seek a mix of news and feature stories, and I will guide you on which style to use with which articles.
- ❑ As convenient as they may be, we do not use friends, roommates, relatives, etc., as sources for your stories, photographs, graphics etc. This is a conflict of interest.
- ❑ Although you may not write about any activities, organizations, projects, companies, etc. in which you are involved in, you can share story ideas with fellow reporters.
- ❑ You get to write a headline for all of your articles!
- ❑ Please include contact info for the reporter(s) (including cell phone) in case editors have questions.
- ❑ As much as we love to share information, we do not share your stories with other classes.
- ❑ Stories done for credit/grade in this class cannot be used for credit in any other class.
- ❑ We are a paperless class, so all stories will be submitted digitally. No handwritten or printed stories will be accepted.

EXTRA CREDIT

The total amount of extra credit available in this class is 25 points. It can be earned in these ways:

- ❑ Do extra stories (over and above the 14 required)=5 points for each story
- ❑ Alert the newsroom to a breaking news story (1 point)
- ❑ Jump on a breaking news story (1 point)
- ❑ Share a tip that leads to another writer's story (1 point)

COPY EDITING

Everyone in class will take a copy-editing test. If you pass and wish to be a copy editor, you will work about four hours per week (two, two-hour shifts) and be graded on your efforts. You will then need to write 11 stories instead of 14 for the semester.

GRADING YOUR STORIES

Every assignment starts off with 100 percent, but avoidable challenges that will result in points being deducted include:

- Errors in fact: 10 points (out of 50)
- Misspelled names: 5 points (out of 50)
- Missing facts in lede or nut graph: 3-5 points
- Unclear writing in lede or nut graph: 3-5 points
- Grammatical errors: 1 point
- Misspelled words: 1 point
- Punctuation and style errors: 1 point

LIBEL and PLAGIARISM

Any story that includes libelous material or material that is someone else's work but represented as your own will result in a zero for the assignment. Examples would be if you describe someone as a murderer in your story before he or she has been convicted, or if you misidentify a subject and implicate someone not guilty of a crime. Another example would be directly copying Ohio State's written accounts of sports games.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS:

College is intended to prepare you for the real world, and for many - especially in journalism - your undergraduate career is like a first job. You can and will make mistakes here, but the goal is to learn from them and not make them again.

I will treat you professionally, and need you to do the same. Behaviors that work in the "real world" and here include:

1. Coming on time and ready to work on the material for the day. Read the material on the links before you come to class. If you do not do that work and we have to "catch you up," you are impacting everyone else in class.
2. Staying in class: I know you have things to do, but we have committed to being in class together for our scheduled class time.
3. You are missed when you are absent: Missing class when we are doing an activity can and will cost you attendance and writing exercise points in the near term and knowledge in the long term.
4. Treating classmates/coworkers with respect: Everyone's ideas have merit, and allowing a civil discussion, even when we disagree, is a key to future success.
5. Dressing for success: I know this class is college, but you never know who might come to class who could help you with an internship or guide your

academic or professional career. Please know I don't want to discuss appropriate class dress with you, but I will if need be.

6. Deadlines are deadlines: Assignments must be submitted by the editors' stated deadlines, and submitted shortly thereafter to the Carmen assignment for this class.
7. I believe in using social media in class. I encourage you to use your devices, and require Twitter for attendance. Remember that, if I can see what you post, so can future employers. Please be responsible about how to present yourself to the world.
8. Lying, cheating or stealing will get you fired: In this class, if you plagiarize or fabricate anything you will **fail the course**, and I will report you to academic misconduct. We have no wiggle room here.
9. Ask questions when you don't understand something.
10. Don't just spell check...PROOFREAD and SELF EDIT!
11. Have fun. We get to find out a bunch of cool, interesting things and share them with other people who need to know them. What better job can there be?

SYLLABUS

Every effort has been made to create a syllabus that is as comprehensive and accurate as possible, but each class is a living entity and changes may arise. Please know I will notify you in writing as soon as any syllabus change may arise.

SAFE & HEALTHY

Keeping students healthy and preventing the spread of illness is important to The Ohio State University. Students are encouraged to stay home if they are sick and may be asked to leave class if they are coughing/sneezing. Students who are sick and cannot attend class must contact Prof. Hunt *BEFORE class* to receive any materials and turn in assignments via Carmen or email. If you do not notify me your assignment will not be accepted.

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF (Your Mental Health):

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are, or someone you know, is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24 hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445 / National: 800-273-8255); or text (4hope to 741741); or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org

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 3335-31-02). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

MANAGING STRESS

College can be a stressful time, and I am always here to help you --- in this class and beyond. If, however, you feel you need more support, I encourage you to reach out to the Student Advocacy Center at 292.1111. They will always work with professors on your behalf.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

CLASS SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Lecture/Discussion</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Week 1 T 8/23	1-1 Welcome to the Lantern	Lecture/Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to the newsroom • Introductions • Go through syllabus • Go through beats 	Meet your editors. Staff photos taken.
Th 8/25	1-2 Finding stories.	Lecture/Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools for reporting • Finding stories 	Copy Editor Test
Week 2 M 8/29	2-1 Working with Video	Lecture/Discussion How to capture broadcast quality video, and meet the video requirement	Press IDs distributed
T 8/30	2-2 The Challenge of Newswriting	Lecture/Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of a strong story • First Five Graphs 	
Th 9/1	2-3 Writing the Lede	Lecture/Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the elements of a strong lede • Different types of ledes 	Writing exercise Practice – not graded
Week 3 M 9/5	NO CLASS	LABOR DAY	NO CLASS

T 9/6	3-1 Lantern Style and Grammar	Lecture/Discussion Lantern Style and the common writing mistakes we all must avoid	Practice WE feedback. Meeting with Editors.
Th 9/8	3-2 Photography	Lecture/Discussion Photo Composition Captions	Hands-on with cameras Writing Exercise 1
Week 4 M 9/12	4-1 Avoiding the Topic Lede	Lecture/Discussion Use what's compelling. Save boring for later	Discuss Writing Exercise 1
T 9/13	4-2 Working with the Gatekeepers	Lecture/Discussion Panel with OSU spokespeople (Off the record)	
Th 9/15	4-3 Writing the Nut Graph/Anecdotal Lede	Lecture/Discussion Defining the nut graph. How to identify context and impact When anecdotal ledes work and don't work	Writing Exercise 2
Week 5 M 9/19	5-1 Choosing the Best Quotes	Lecture/Discussion Identifying quotes that advance your story	Discuss Writing Exercise 2
T 9/20	5-2 The Art of the Interview	Lecture/Discussion There are no stupid questions...	
Th 9/22	5-3 Context is King	Lecture/Discussion Making sure everyone understands	Writing exercise 3
Week 6 M 9/26	6-1 Translate the Technical	Lecture/Discussion Dealing with/translating technical language in your stories.	Discuss writing exercise 3

T 9/27	6-2 Breaking News	Lecture/Discussion Online and Social Accuracy and Urgency	
Th 9/29	6-3 Reporting Traps and How to Avoid Them.	Lecture/Discussion How to avoid common reporting pitfalls and meet deadline.	Writing Exercise 4
Week 7 M 10/3	7-1 Developing Sources on Your Beat	Lecture/Discussion How to get your sources to respond	Discuss Writing Exercise 4
T 10/4	7-2 Enterprise/ Investigative reporting	Lecture/Discussion What does it take to report the big, investigative series?	
Th 10/6	7-3 Public Records/Online Records	Lecture/Discussion Your rights to documents and records.	Writing Exercise 5
Week 8 M 10/10	8-1 Working with Data and Math	Lecture/Discussion How Excel works as a reporting tool.	Discuss Writing Exercise 5
T 10/11	8-2 Journalism Ethics	Lecture/Discussion Challenges to traditional journalism.	
Th 10/13	No Class	Fall Break	No Class
Week 9 M 10/17	9-1 The Lantern, By the Numbers	Lecture/Discussion Taking a look at the first half of the semester through analytics.	

T 10/18	9-2 Bias and Truth in Daily Journalism	Lecture/Discussion Avoiding actual bias and the appearance of bias	
Th 10/20	9-3 Digital Journalism Ethics	Lecture/Discussion How Digital adds new ethical concerns	Writing Exercise 6
Week 10 M 10/24	10-1 Newswriting Challenges	Lecture/Discussion Writing the Long Story	Discuss Writing Exercise 6
T 10/25	10-2 Ending stories	Lecture/Discussion As important as you begin, how to endstories	
Th 10/27	10-3 Editing: what to do	Lecture/Discussion Editing checklists and how to self- edit.	Writing Exercise 7
Week 11 M 10/31	11-1 The Developing Story	Lecture/Discussion Following the Story to its End	Discuss Writing Exercise 7
T 11/1	11-2 Editing complicated stories.	Lecture/Discussion Break down and reorganize an article	
Th 11/3	11-3 Social media in live reporting.	Lecture/Discussion Socialmediareporting Tools you	Writing Exercise 8
Week 12 M 11/7	12-1 Brand Identity for Journalists	Lecture/Discussion Your brand and why it's important	Discuss Writing Exercise 8

T 11/8	12-2 Media Management	Lecture/Discussion How Digital is Disrupting the News	
Th 11/10	No Class	Veteran's Day	No Class
Week 13 M 11/14	13-1 Specialized reporting topics	Lecture/Discussion Sports Government Health	
T 11/15	13-2 Special Reporting Issues	Lecture/Discussion Race and gender Crime and police	
Th 11/17	13-3 Your Future and the Lantern	Lecture/Discussion How the Lantern figures beyond this class	Writing Exercise 9
Week 14 M 11/21	14-1 Rethinking Journalism	Lecture/Discussion Changing expectations Changes in storytelling	Discuss Writing Exercise 9
T 11/22	14-2 Alternate Storytelling	Lecture/Discussion The multi-media form of storytelling	
Th 11/24	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING	NO CLASS

Week 15 M 11/28	15-1 Brand Journalism	Lecture/Discussion An old business practice returns.	
T 11/29	15-2 Internships and career goals	Lecture/Discussion Free vs Paid Internships pros and cons	
Th 12/1	The Reporter Editor Challenge	It's Reporters v. Editors in the final Writing Exercise!	Final Writing Exercise
Week 16 M 12/5	16-1 Lantern by the Numbers II	Lecture/Discussion Looking at the semester through analytics	Discuss Final Exercise
T 12/6	16-2 Wrapping Up	Lecture/Discussion Making this class better	