

Lantern Independent Study: Editing Experience

AU2024~275 Journalism
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to the staff of *The Lantern*!

In this course, you learn what it means to take on the roles of editors and directors at *Lantern Media*. In these roles you will help manage teams of student reporters and freelancers. You will make story assignments and weigh pitches, assess the strength and weaknesses of their reporting and writing, and work under very real deadlines. All of this will be done to ensure *The Lantern* and *Lantern TV* and their websites are filled with professional-quality Arts, Campus and Sports stories.

You will each hold specialized roles to ensure this gets done. Whether you are an assistant section editor, a sports director or you oversee the design desk, you will build on the fundamental writing, editing, researching and reporting skills you have acquired inside and outside of classrooms and use them to deliver the news to the OSU campus and to a much larger digital audience that spans the globe.

Your goals: to find and feature content that is newsworthy and present it to readers and viewers according to its news value, and to edit the stories so that they are clear, concise, organized and accurate.

This is a demanding job. You will learn what it means to edit and to manage and how best to deal with the unexpected.

COURSE GOALS

1. Precisely edit various stories for *The Lantern* and *Lantern TV*.
2. Work with *Lantern* and *Lantern TV* reporters to complete stories suitable for publication or TV packages suitable for posting.
3. Utilize multimedia to produce content beyond words on a page.
4. Become a newsroom manager.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: (recommended and required)

Brooks & Pinson. *The Art of Editing in the Age of Convergence* (rec)

Strunk & White. *The Elements of Style* (rec)

AP Style Book or Online: <http://www.apstylebook.com/online> (required)

The Lantern Style Book (required)

GRADING

This course is pass-fail. One (1) credit hour is awarded each semester, provided you successfully work and learn as an editor in your current role. How successful you are directly relates to how you help your reporters, your fellow editors and *Lantern Media* improve and succeed in its mission to deliver the news.

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 withdraw from *Lantern Media* (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

Story Production

As an editor, you have a specific role tied to the news production process. This role is spelled out in the *Lantern Handbook*. Each of you received a copy of this with your employment documents. Regardless of this role: each of you shares this common assignment: that *Lantern Media* offers the most engaging and newsworthy stories that can be produced during the course of the semester.

The issue of *how* we deliver this news is more complicated and it will require each of you to develop skills in multi-platform news production.

Digital News: *Lantern Media* is first and foremost a digital operation. Editors and station managers will produce a steady supply of edited and accurate content (stories, videos, photos and audio) for *The Lantern's* website following a schedule set by editor in chief, the managing editor for content and the advisor at the beginning of each semester.

Social Media: We live in an era in which there are no captive audiences. Editors will develop and use *Lantern Media's* social channels to help maintain, engage and grow our audience. These channels will also be used to share news during breaking news situations.

Print Media: Editors will learn to work as a team to produce a newspaper twice each week. This will mean operating under a tight schedule and deadline in which stories and photos are received, edited, copy edited, designed on pages and transmitted on time to a press for printing and distribution the next morning. Digital media and social media will be scheduled and timed to accompany the release of this printed product.

Leadership

As a reporter, you looked to your editor or station manager for guidance and feedback. This is the role you now take, to help the next generation of reporters sharpen their skills. This will mean working with a team of students with varying levels of expertise in reporting, writing photography and videography. The effective manager is a person who best learns how to inspire the best from his reporters and encourage and show them how to improve. This is a skill that few are born with and most have to learn.

Editing

Just like leadership, editing is a skill that must be learned. You will develop the ability to quickly assess content for strengths and weaknesses, and a critical-Decision-making process to improve these stories beyond their submitted form. Likewise, you will check facts, ensure quotes are in context and deal with a multitude of other issues, including ethical choices in this editing process.

The assessment process is simple to describe:

1. It is good enough for publication/airing with editing and fact checking.
2. It is good enough for publication but has questions that an editor cannot answer and a reporter will need to do more work.
3. It is not worthy of publication and you must discuss why with the reporter

This means articles/packages may go through numerous revisions before they are finished.

Breaking News

Finally, the strength of a news organization is often tested by the unexpected. You will learn how to use all of the skills described above to respond in real time to the surprise events, positive and negative, that engage an online audience.

Submission Guidelines

All stories/packages will be submitted to editors as follows:

1. *Name the file (this is called a "slug") with this information: LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, ASSIGNMENT NAME, DATE*
2. Included above the body of each article:
 - SUGGESTED HEADLINE
 - REPORTER BYLINE
 - REPORTER EMAIL
 - CONTACT LIST with phone numbers and/or email for your sources, so you can reach out to sources if reporters cannot be reached.

Details on Articles:

- Some assignments will come from you. You will also expect your reporters to pitch their own story ideas. Freelancers must pitch two stories each week. Practicum reporters must pitch stories from their beats. You will work with your reporters to refine these skills.
- Stories typically must have at least two human sources and these sources must have expertise to speak on the article's topic.
- If a reporter finds a great story idea for someone else's beat or section work with that reporter to get it done. Collaboration is a key to

newsroom success.

Ethics Issues:

- Accuracy is the keystone of journalism. Despite our best efforts we will make mistakes. When this occurs, we will publish corrections to set the record straight. If an editor is the source of the inaccuracy, we will disclose it as such.
- Any story that includes libelous material must be carefully edited to avoid publication or kept from publication altogether. Example: A story describes someone as a murderer before she or he has been convicted, or a subject in the story is misidentified as someone guilty of a crime.
- We do not allow reporters to use friends, roommates, relatives, etc., as sources for their stories, photographs, graphics etc. This is a conflict of interest.
- You will not edit stories focused on any activities, organizations, projects, companies, etc. in which you are involved in. This, also, is a conflict of interest.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS:

The Lantern is intended to operate as professional news organization. To that end we must behave and work together professionally, and model that behavior for the reporters. Behaviors that work in the “real world” and here include:

1. Spend time in The Lantern, and be ready to work on the material for the day.
2. We must do all we can to be available for the students and each other: So if you are not in the newsroom we must try to be available through other forms of contact. Similarly, we need to let people know in advance when we can't be in the newsroom on days and times when we are expected.
3. Treating coworkers with respect: Everyone's ideas have merit, and allowing a civil discussion, even when we disagree, is a key to future success.
4. Dressing for success: I know this is college, but you never know who might come to the newsroom or who you might meet on assignment who could help you with an internship or guide your academic or professional career.
5. Deadlines are deadlines: We submit the Lantern on time for print. We must hold reporters who miss their deadlines accountable as well.
6. Lying, cheating or stealing will get you fired in the real world: In this class, if you plagiarize or fabricate anything you will get an unsatisfactory for the course and I will have to report you to academic misconduct, even if you accidentally do it. We have no wiggle room here.
7. Read *The Lantern* watch *Lantern TV* and review the other news organizations' websites. You cannot be a good editor if you don't keep up with what other news organizations are doing.

OFFICE HOURS

My office hours are listed on the front of the syllabus, and I would love to meet with you to get you extra, one-on-one article assistance or just to hang out. Everyone will need to set up a one-on-one meeting with me in the first two weeks of the semester to talk about your semester goals. If you do not come during my office hours or

schedule that meeting by the end of the third week, it will significantly impact your ability to achieve the satisfactory needed to pass the class.

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 class any materials and turn in assignments via the dropbox or email. If you do not notify Prof. Hunt, your assignment will not be accepted.

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).

Food Security (<https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/>, 614-688-2508). The Ohio State University is committed to ensuring that all students have access to adequate and healthy food. Any undergraduate or graduate student with a BuckID may confidentially use the Buckeye Food Alliance food pantries. No proof of need is required. The pantry is located in Lincoln Tower, Suite 150 (1800 Cannon Dr., Columbus, OH 43210). Check the website or call for current hours.

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.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments
Week 1-2		Newsriting basics review and macro editing	The Inverted Pyramid Structure (OWL), The First Five Graphs (Gannett)
Week 3-4		Common Lantern and AP Style issues, Ethics	Lantern Style Book AP Style Book Sections SPJ Code of Ethics
Week 4-5		Micro editing: parts of speech, punctuation	Paramedic Method of Editing (OWL), Quotes (News Manual)
Week 6-7		Micro editing: sentence structure, direct and indirect construction	Conciseness (OWL), On Writing Clearly (George Orwell)
Week 8		Newspaper critique	<i>Reviewing The Lantern, strengths and weaknesses</i>
Week 9-10		Headlines and photo captions	Hot Tips (Poynter), The Nine Commandments of Caption Writing (The Slot), Writing Photo Captions (IJNet)
FALL BREAK			
Week 11-12		Story structure and organization: daily	Story Framing, Four Vital Ingredients (Poynter), Beyond the Inverted Pyramid: Alternative Story Forms (PoynterU)
Week 13-14		Story structure and organization: enterprise	The Analytic/Enterprise Feature: The Nut Graf Part I (Poynter)
Week 15-16		Wrapping up	Review of 1st Semester: Set Goals for 2nd Semester

Week 1-2		Multimedia 1: photos	<i>Guest Lecture professional photographer Photo Editing (JPROF)</i>
Week 3-4		Multimedia 2: video	<i>How to better coordinate assignments with video LTV Class Lecturer (PDF Handouts)</i>
Week 5-6		Social Media 1	<i>How Social Media is Changing Journalism (link), How Journalism Rules Still apply (link)</i>
Week 7-8		Social Media 2	<i>Guidelines for breaking news(Lantern Handbook), ethical reporting(Lantern Social Media Policy)</i>
Week 9		News Value 1	<i>What guides placement, importance and selection of stories (latest Pew News Values research)</i>
SPRING BREAK			
Week 11-12		News Value 2	<i>What Readers value in the Lantern as determined by our analytics</i>
Week 13-14		The Next Generation	<i>Training the next Lantern Staff (checklist)</i>
Week 15-16		It's the Final Countdown	<i>Reviewing the editing, design and efficiency of the news production</i>

