



SYLLABUS: COMM 2221 WRITING AND EDITING FOR MEDIA AUTUMN 2025-HYBRID

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides an in-depth study of the foundational skill necessary to become a professional journalist in the ever-changing media landscape. Students will create content with the intention of becoming published by the end of the semester.

Instructor

Instructor: Bethany Barker

Ph.D., Communication, The Ohio State University, 2017
Master's, Communication, The Ohio State University, 2013
Bachelor's, Communication, Otterbein University, 2003

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Office hours T/Th 1:30-2:30 p.m. Zoom or in-person

Link to office hours is in the Welcome module on Carmen

Course description

Designed to help students develop the fundamentals of news reporting, writing, and editing across news platforms.

Course Mode

This course will be presented in a hybrid format with in-person meetings every Tuesday and Thursday in Journalism 281 with some Zoom meetings. See the course schedule for Zoom or asynchronous Online dates. This is a flipped, active learning classroom. Students can expect to watch a lecture or video prior to class time and come prepared to engage in activities related to the week's topic. Students should be prepared to leave the classroom at any time during sessions to conduct interviews, take photos or practice other journalism-related skills.

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Course learning objectives

1. Write and produce professional news content, displaying a command of grammar, spelling, syntax and Associated Press style.
2. Understand the need for fairness, accuracy and expediency in news stories.
3. Demonstrate basic skills of interviewing and researching.
4. Adhere to ethical journalistic practices.
5. Begin to understand how social media and multimedia augment and enhance reporting, and utilize those skills in our reporting.
6. Walk into a newsroom and contribute as an editor and/or multimedia journalist on your first day by being proficient in reporting, writing, social media and multi-media elements.

Course learning outcomes

1. Write news articles in the inverted pyramid and feature style.
2. Tell factual stories across platforms.
3. Identify and execute articles that contain news value.
4. Interview appropriate live human experts in person, and take accurate notes that are utilized in articles to provide paraphrased facts and supporting quotes.
5. Develop story ideas.
6. Utilize social media in a professionally constructive way.
7. Get published in The lantern and TheLantern.com, or get footage on LanternTV.

Course materials

- “Always Get the Name of the Dog: A Guide to Interviewing” (available in iTunes store) \$1.99 (Recommended)
- AP Style Book (book, app or online) <https://www.apstylebook.com/>
- The Lantern (print or online)
- Readings provided on Carmen

Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Carmen:**
 - Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://carmen.osu.edu). Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
 - Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>
 - **This course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.**
 - [Carmen accessibility](#)
- **Mobile device**
 - Students in this course should have a device that has word processing capability and can take photos and videos. Devices can be checked out at no charge through the [Student Technology Loan Program](#).

Grades

Assignment or category	Points
In-Class assignments (150 points—10 points each) You will have a variety of hands-on experiences on which to write in class. Your participation in and completion of these activities is key to your skill development, and will each be worth 10 points. They include simulated news events, coverage, write-ups on guest speakers, video and audio storytelling assignments, etc. These points can only be earned if you are in class for the activities, as they cannot be made up.	200
Reading and Grammar Quizzes (100 points—10 points per quiz/12 quizzes)	120

Assignment or category	Points
Quizzes will be presented on Carmen each week and are to be completed prior to the first class meeting for the week. Due dates for each quiz will be on Carmen. Questions will be on assigned readings, videos, AP Style, Grammar and ability to demonstrate grasp of materials from the previous week.	
News Story Almost anything can be considered news somewhere in the Ohio State community. We will find a story idea around campus and develop that idea into a news story using research, real-life, in-person interviewing and journalistic writing in the “inverted pyramid” style for submission to The Lantern. We will keep the story simple— something that is newsworthy to Ohio State readers. We will focus on the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How of each story. Examples would be action by president’s office, new fee, new business, new appointment, etc.	100
Feature Feature articles have more of a “lifespan” than news articles and provide for more descriptive writing with a focus on people. These do not utilize the “inverted pyramid,” but a style called the “writing hourglass,” which features anecdotes, a “nut graph” and a body filled with descriptions and facts. You will write one feature article this semester on a topic related to the Ohio State community.	150
Exam This will be made of two parts Part 1: Deadline writing a story on a topic provided in class for submission to The Lantern Part 2: Carmen exam on topics covered up to the midterm. A study guide will be provided. Questions are multiple choice, true/false or fill in the blank.	200
Final Project The final project will allow you to show off your new skills. You will work as a part of a team to research a journalism-related topic and create a comprehensive project that is displayed on a Wordpress/ Wix or equivalent blog.	180 (175 for project, 5 for team pitch)
Total	950 Points and 100%

See course schedule, below, for due dates

Attendance

Attendance is expected for every class period, no matter the format. This is a flipped classroom where all readings and videos are expected to be completed prior to class. In-class assignments will help students to gain the skills necessary to complete the learning objectives. These activities may not be made up without a valid medical or university excuse. Documentation must be provided.

Late assignments

A deadline is a deadline. Assignments turned in after the deadline will only be accepted with a valid medical or university excuse. It is the student's responsibility to be sure the assignment submitted correctly. **Please check your Carmen folder after submission to ensure the upload is there and complete. Additionally, drafts must be completed on time in order for a final submission to be accepted for a grade.**

Students who know of an impending excused absence should notify the instructor with documentation ahead of the absence to arrange a makeup. **Makeups must be requested and turned in within 1 week of the original due date.**

Revisions

Writing is an iterative process. We will provide opportunities for peer review and instructor advice throughout the class. After the final draft is turned in and graded, the instructor will provide an opportunity for a revision. The revision period will be one week and is optional. The instructor will grade the revision and the average of the two grades will be used for the final grade. This applies to the news and feature articles.

Extra credit

There is a maximum of 20 extra-credit points available in this class, which will be applied to the final class point total. It may earn it by:

1. Participating the outside class activities identified during the semester. Points will be assigned according to depth of the activity.
2. If you submit a story **BEYOND** the ones you write for this class to The Lantern, and it gets published with only your by-line! All extra credit must be reported via Carmen by the last day of class.

Grading scale

93–100: A
90–92.9: A-
87–89.9: B+
83–86.9: B
80–82.9: B-

77–79.9: C+

73–76.9: C

70 –72.9: C-

67 –69.9: D+

60 –66.9: D

Below 60: E

Please note: Carmen and Buckeyelink do not round up grades. Your grades will be exactly what you have earned and **will not be rounded up**. Extra credit will be offered for students who wish to earn a chance to improve grades.

Faculty feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

Grading and feedback

For larger assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **10-14 days**. In-class activities and quizzes are graded in batches. These will be updated at least once per month.

E-mail and text

I will reply to e-mails within **24 hours on school days**. You will receive my personal phone number for urgent text or calls when out on a story or conferences regarding stories. Please use sparingly and for situations where time is of the essence. I will respond as I am able.

Instructor communication

Announcements will be made to the class via Carmen Announcements and sent through a Carmen message. Please regularly check both to ensure you do not miss a communication. Make sure your Carmen messages are not sent to your Clutter folder. In the event of my illness or a weather-related incident, I will send out an email no later than noon.

Attendance, participation, and discussions

Communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Please visit the Professionalism page in the Week 1 module. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** This course is intended to prepare you for future communications as a professional. Assignments should be approached in this manner. Please proofread, edit, and include appropriate language.

- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Furthermore, rude or impatient communications are generally not appreciated in professional situations. Please consider your words as if you were a professional when communicating with other students and the instructor.

University and course policies

Standard OSU Statements

Please review for information regarding [Academic Misconduct, Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity, Religious Accommodations, Disability Accommodations, Intellectual Diversity, Grievances, and Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct.](#)

Please review for information regarding [Copyright, Mental Health Services, Content Warning, and Military-Connected Students.](#)

Academic integrity policy

Policies for this course

- **Reusing past work:** In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.
- **Collaboration and informal peer-review:** The course includes many opportunities for formal collaboration with your classmates. While study groups and peer-review of major written projects is encouraged, remember that comparing answers on a quiz or assignment is not permitted. If you're unsure about a particular situation, please feel free just to ask ahead of time.
- **Group projects:** This course includes group projects, which can be stressful for students when it comes to dividing work, taking credit, and receiving grades and feedback. I have attempted to make the guidelines for group work as clear as possible for each activity and assignment, but please let me know if you have any questions.
- **Use of generative AI:** We will review appropriate use of generative AI to model current policies of professional journalists and newsrooms. However, generative AI may not be used to write any copy, draft or final, in this course.

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/>

Course schedule (tentative)

Reporting isn't always a scheduled event. As journalists, we must be nimble and able to adapt to the situation. This calendar was created in good faith that we will be able to complete these tasks on these days. However, we will be flexible to accommodate any situations that may enhance the learning experience.

All quizzes are due by 3:00 p.m. EST/EDT, except where indicated on the syllabus and Carmen.

Week	Dates	Tuesday	Thursday	Due
1	8/26-8/28	Welcome and expectations	News Value and intro to AP Style	Syllabus Quiz Due Friday 11:59 p.m.
2	9/2- 9/4	Inverted pyramid writing/ Lantern newsroom visit	Finding a story and sources	Quiz 2 9/2
3	9/9- 9/11	News Story Pitches	Guest Speaker	Quiz 3 9/9
4	9/16- 9/18	Interviewing and working with sources	Writer's Toolbox	Quiz 4 9/16
5	9/23- 9/25	Photos	Headlines and drafts	Quiz 5 9/23
6	9/30- 10/2	Features and peer review	News Story Workshop (Zoom)	News Story Draft Due 9/30 at the beginning of class News Story Final Due 10/2 11:59 p.m. Quiz 6 9/30

7	10/7- 10/9	Feature Story Pitches	Working with video	Quiz 7 10/7
8	10/14-10/16	Public Records and Research (Online)	Autumn Break No class	
9	10/21-10/23	Disinformation and Misinformation	Curiosity Challenge	Quiz 8 10/21
10	10/28- 10/30	Drafts	Peer Review	Feature Story Draft Due 10/30 at the beginning of class Quiz 9 10/28
11	11/4-11/6	Feature Story Workshop (Zoom)	Final Project Introduction	Feature Story Final Due 11/4 11:59 p.m. Quiz 10 11/6
12	11/11-11/13	Veteran's Day (no class)	Final Project Proposal Pitch	Quiz 11 11/3
13	11/18- 11/20	Writing with Data	Exam Review/ Curiosity Article Workshop	Quiz 12 11/18
14	11/25- 11/27	Exam (Online)	Thanksgiving Break	Curiosity Article due 11/24 11:59 p.m.
15	12/2- 12/4	Final Project Workshop	Final Project Workshop	
16	12/9	Final Project presentations		Final projects due in Carmen 12/6