

The Lantern Practicum

COMM2223

M 2:15 - 4:05 pm (lab)

W/F 12:45 - 2:05pm (class)

(Room 216 Journalism Bldg.)

Spring 2026

Office: 100 Journalism Building

Lantern office phone: 614.247.7030

Lantern office hours:

Monday 9 am -12 pm

(or by appointment)

Professor: Spencer Hunt

email: hunt.754@osu.edu

Cell: 614.264.5000

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to *The Lantern*!

You are now part of an Ohio State institution that got its start in 1881. And 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.

This class is intended to function like a real newsroom. That's because *The Lantern*, is a digital news organization that has an international audience. You will 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 each week. 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 11 published articles by the end of the semester. Some of you may 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, produce a video and meet deadlines.

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

COURSE COALS

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 logistics of media work and what's 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 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*.

You are expected to know grammar rules and to consistently follow Associated Press and Lantern style. This is important as these are the writing rules every working professional journalist must follow. The AP style guidelines represent the universal rules. Lantern style governs situations specific to Ohio State, students, faculty and issues specific to this university.

GRADING

Final course grades will be calculated in the following way:

- **11 articles (50 points each = 550 points)**
- **Reporter Notebooks (150 points)**
- **Writing exercises (100 points)**
- **Multimedia: video and photo work (100 points)**
- **Editor feedback on your work (50 points)**
- **Pitch meeting attendance (50 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 a field trip to *The Dispatch* for a session with working journalists, guest talks from subject matter experts 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 ask me or email 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 generally there until at least 5 p.m. If the office door is open, walk in. I’m not just saying that.

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.

WITHDRAWALPOLICY

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

Pitch Meeting Attendance (50 points)

We don't take attendance in this class, but we will for your weekly pitch meetings with editors. If you miss a lecture, I'll notice and expect to know why. Your work with editors in these weekly planning sessions is important, too. And so, attending these meetings is worth 5 percent of your final grade.

Reporter Notebooks (150 points)

Across the semester, you'll submit five reporter's notebook assignments that document how you're developing story ideas, tracking sources, and reflecting on your reporting process. These are the behind-the-scenes logs of your journalistic journey. Sharing how you reported is just as important as submitting stories, because the written work does not show what you went through to achieve your goal, or how you can improve upon the reporting process.

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 simulates 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 one video for this class. There will be a hands-on session to teach the basics of video capture and editing. You will work with the video producers to create a short video package. This video can either accompany one of your stories or stand alone without a story. Many reporters preferred to do standalones, by the way.

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 assignment in Carmen.* (Please note that Carmen is notorious for not accepting video files. If this happens, let me know) 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 (11 articles @ 50 points each = 550 points)

You are responsible for developing 11 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. Also, you will be expected to have stories filed by certain deadlines during the semester, these deadlines will vary depending on the subject matter, which brings us to...

SPORTS JOURNALISM

Sports are a huge focus at Ohio State, and how we cover athletes and games are evolving. To that end, sports journalists in this class will work most Mondays each week with Professor Nicole Kraft. This is a new and major step for the Lantern and this class. Sports reporters can and will see dramatic changes to the way we report and write stories and work together to report the news. Outside of Monday classes, sports reporters will attend Tuesday and Thursday sessions with Professor Spencer Hunt.

This also means that, for sports reporters, your story assignments and deadlines to submit will be designed around the rigors of the semester and the new expectations within this subject area.

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. 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 and named Carmen assignment in Canvas. Each of you will have 11 separate Carmen assignments in which to file your stories. Sports stories will be graded by Professor Kraft. Arts and Life stories will be graded by Professor Hunt.

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 11 stories. Though 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 one story a week. Students who do not can quickly find themselves in a bind. Stories that are not filed by certain points within the semester, for Arts, Campus and Sports, will receive zero points.

Any assignments that don't meet weekly deadlines set by you and your editors during weekly meetings 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 lower your grade.

Why zero points? Deadlines are critically important in the news business. When you agree to report and write 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. That means 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 must first be pitched to editors. Once accepted by editors and completed, stories will be submitted to Carmen assignment as follows, or they won't get graded:

1. *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/Review articles.** 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 11 articles for a section other than the one you are assigned.
- 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 11 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)

GRADING YOUR STORIES

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

- ❑ Errors in fact: up to 5 points (out of 50)
- ❑ Misspelled names: up to 5 points (out of 50)
- ❑ Missing facts in lede or nut graph: 2-5 points
- ❑ Unclear writing in lede or nut graph: 2-5 points
- ❑ Grammatical errors: 1 point
- ❑ Misspelled words: 1 point
- ❑ Punctuation and style errors: 1 point

LIBEL and PLAGIARISM

Chat GPT/AI in the classroom

The use of AI in the writing of emails and messages is glamorized in commercials, but seldom are successful in writing new stories. Programs like ChatGPT are designed to provide assistance in generating human-like text responses based on given prompts. In this course, you may use AI tools to brainstorm, come up with ideas, improve your writing, or explore complex concepts. However, it is essential to remember the programs like ChatGPT should complement your efforts, not replace them.

You are permitted to use AI tools in the following ways:

- **Brainstorming:** Used to generate ideas, concepts or potential solutions to specific problems or assignments.
- **Writing Assistance:** Used to enhance your OWN writing, receive suggestions on sentence structure, grammar and style. Ask AI to identify the issues so that you can fix them yourself!

Responsible Use and Academic Integrity

Though AI can be a valuable resource, it is crucial to uphold academic integrity and responsible use. Plagiarism and cheating are strictly prohibited and will result in a report to COAM. When using AI tools, you must always provide appropriate attribution if you incorporate any generated content into your assignments or projects.

Limitations of AI

Keep in mind that an AI is a machine-learning model and has its limitations. It may not always produce accurate or reliable information. As such, you must critically evaluate the responses generated and verify that information from reliable sources before incorporating it into your work.

Support and guidance

If you are unsure about the appropriate use of AI tools or have any questions related to its use, please ASK before you use and submit!

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 M 1/12	1 – 1 Welcome to the Lantern	Lecture/Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome to the newsroom <input type="checkbox"/> Introductions <input type="checkbox"/> Go through syllabus <input type="checkbox"/> Go through beats 	Meet with editors in the Lantern.
W 1/14	1 – 2 Finding stories.	Lecture/Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tools for reporting <input type="checkbox"/> Findingstories 	Copy Editor Test
F 1/16	1– 3 The Challenge of Newswriting	Lecture/Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Elements of a strong story <input type="checkbox"/> First Five Graphs 	Writing lab with ledes
Week 2 M 1/19	No Class	MLK Day Holiday	No Class
W 1/21	2-1 Videography	Lecture/Discussion How to get the best video for b-roll and on-camera interviews	Meeting with editors
F 1/23	2 – 2 Writing the Lede	Lecture/Discussion Identifying the elements of a strong lede Different types of ledes	Writing exercise Practice – not graded
Week 3 M 1/26	3-1 Lantern Style and Grammar	Lecture/Discussion Lantern style and the common writing mistakes we all must avoid	Discussion Practice writing exercise

W 1/28	3-2 Avoiding the Topic Lede	Lecture/Discussion Writing a compelling lede	Discuss practice writing exercise
F 1/30	3-3 Writing the Nutgraph/ Anecdotal Ledes	Lecture/Discussion Defining the nutgraph. How to identify context and impact	Writing Exercise 1
Week 4 2/2	4-1 Issues with sourcing/sources	Lecture/Discussion When two sources aren't enough. How to identify relevant sources	Discuss WE 1 Meeting with Editors
W 2/4	4-2 Working with the gatekeepers	Lecture/Discussion Working with comm. professionals	Panel discussion with OSU PIOs
F 2/6	4-3 Photography	Lecture/Discussion Photo Journalism Captions	Hands on w/cameras. Writing Exercise 2
Week 5 M 2/9	5-1 The Art of the Interview	Lecture/Discussion There are no stupid questions	Discuss WE 2 Meet with editors
W 2/11	5-2 Context is King	Lecture/Discussion Key for Nut Graphs, How to Get What you Need	
F 2/13	5-3 Using the best quotes	Lecture/Discussion Identifying quotes. When to paraphrase	Writing Exercise 3

Week 6 M 2/16	6-1 Breaking News	Lecture/Discussion Online and Social Accuracy and Urgency	Discuss writing exercise 3/ Meeting with editors
W 2/18	6-2 Reporting Traps and How to Avoid Them	Lecture/Discussion How to avoid common reporting pitfalls and meet deadline.	
F 2/20	6-3 Enterprise/ Investigative Reporting	Lecture/Discussion What does it take to report the big, investigative series?	Writing Exercise 4
Week 7 M 2/23	7-1 Translate the Technical	Lecture/Discussion Dealing with/translating difficult technical language in your beat.	Discuss Writing Exercise 4
W 2/25	7-2 Your Future with the Lantern	Lecture/Discussion The next steps in your journalism career	
F 2/27	7-3 Public/Online records and your reporting	Lecture/Discussion Your rights to documents and records.	Writing Exercise 5
Week 8 M 3/2	8-1 Journalism Ethics	Lecture/Discussion Challenges to traditional journalism.	Discuss Writing Exercise 5
W 3/4	8-2 The Lantern by The Numbers	Lecture/Discussion Taking a look at the first half of stories through analytics	
F 3/6	8-3 Journalism and your mental health	Lecture/Discussion The challenges posed by your job and your audience.	Writing Exercise 6

Week 9 M 3/9	9-1 Digital Journalism Ethics	Lecture/Discussion Ethical challenges in a digital age.	Discussion Writing Exercise 6 Meet w Editors
W 3/11	9-2 The Developing Story	Lecture/Discussion Following the Story to its End	
F 3/13	9-3 Ending stories	Lecture/Discussion As important as you begin How to end stories	Writing exercise 7
Week 10 M 3/16	No Class	SPRING BREAK	No Class
W 3/18	No Class	SPRING BREAK	No Class
F 3/20	No Class	SPRING BREAK	No Class
Week 11 M 3/23	11-1 Newswriting Challenges	Lecture/Discussion Writing the Long Story	W.E. 7 feedback Meet w Editors
W 3/25	11-2 Self-Editing: What to Do	Lecture/Discussion Editing checklists and how to self edit. Understanding the editing process	
F 3/27	11-3 Editing complicated stories.	Lecture/Discussion How to break down and reorganize an article	Writing Exercise 8

Week 12 M 3/30	12-1 Social media in live reporting.	Lecture/Discussion Social media in reporting Tools you can use	W.E. 8 feedback News Meeting with Editors
W 4/1	12-2 Numbers, Math and Data	Lecture/Discussion A primer for Data Journalism	
F 4/3	12-3 Establishing brand identity in social media	Lecture/Discussion Brand identity	Writing Exercise 9
Week 13 M 4/6	13-1 Media Management	Lecture/Discussion How Digital is Disrupting the News	Writing Exercise 9 feedback / Meet w Editors
W 4/8	13-2 Specialized reporting topics	Lecture/Discussion Sports/Government/Health	
F 4/10	13-3 Reporter Editor Challenge	Lecture/Discussion Race and gender Crime and police	Writing Exercise 10
Week 14 M 4/13	14-1 Special Reporting Issues	Lecture/Discussion Establish your digital self. Build your online resume	Writing Exercise 10 Feedback/ Meet w Editors
W 4/15	14-2 Rethinking Journalism	Lecture/Discussion Changing expectations Changes in storytelling	
F 4/17	14-3 Alternate Storytelling	Lecture/Discussion The multimedia form of storytelling	

Week 15 M 4/20	15-1 Brand Journalism	Lecture/Discussion An old business practice returns.	Meet w Editors
W 4/22	15-2 Internships and career goals	Lecture/Discussion Free vs Paid Internships pros and cons	
F 4/24	15-3 Lantern by the Numbers II	Lecture/Discussion Looking at the semester through analytics	
M 4/27	16-1 Wrapping Up	Final work-through on remaining stories.	