

Public Affairs Reporting Spring 2005 (Section 1): Journalism 425



Course Web Site

Syllabus

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The following is of critical importance:

Read the entire syllabus. The syllabus for this course is **ONLY** online. Please understand that you **are responsible for the information in the syllabus, specifically information regarding deadlines, assignments and requirements.**

Public Affairs Reporting will meet from 9:10-10:25 a.m., Tuesday and Thursday, in Murrow 243. Please read all the material below carefully.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

- [The Elements of Journalism](#), (First Edition), Bill Kovach & Tom Rosenstiel, Three Rivers Press, New York, N.Y., Copyright 2001.
- [Advanced Reporting, Discovering Patterns in News Events](#), (Second Edition), Donald L. Shaw, Maxwell McCombs and Gerry Keir, Waveland Press, Prospect Heights, Illinois, Copyright 1997.
- [The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual](#), (latest edition), Norm Goldstein, editor.
- [The Daily Evergreen](#), **MUST** be read daily and brought to class as content will be a part of this course in a number of ways, possibly including quiz questions and critiques.

A dictionary and grammar guide should be brought to class.

Other reading materials will be assigned throughout the course.

Because many students taking this course hope to enter the journalism profession, class time will also be devoted to discussing the news industry and other current mass-media issues.

Course Goals

This course will help prepare students for careers as media reporters. Students will receive advanced instruction in the techniques of news writing and reporting, learn how to gather information from a diverse and multicultural perspective, and write publishable news articles.

Course Policies

Attendance:

- Class attendance is vital, as material will be introduced that is not covered in the text. Although J-425 has a sizable knowledge component, it is also a skills course that includes hands-on work and assignments. You cannot learn the skills necessary to do the assignments unless you attend the lectures.
- Poor attendance will be reflected in your grade because of missed assignments or problems with completion. If you attend faithfully and show you are trying to master the skills, but still have problems, I will show some understanding. The converse will also apply.
- You will earn 10 points for every class attended. If you are five or more minutes late, you will not be credited with attendance points. If you are more than 10 minutes late, you will not be allowed into that class session. Please do not be disruptive by knocking on the door and trying to get into the classroom.
- Any assignment missed due to absence **CANNOT** be made up. **Do not ask for exceptions.** Some consideration, however, might be given (at my discretion) if there is documented hospitalization, family death, university-sponsored travel (documented in advance) or extended individual sickness.

Assignment format:

Assignments **WILL NOT** be accepted unless they are typed and double-spaced, using a 12-point easily readable (Times New Roman) font.

Learning versus grades:

Learning is a life-long process and you must take responsibility for educating yourself. In courses that involve creative work, such as J-425, grades can be at odds with learning. Try to focus more on real learning, not just grades. Real learning, the kind that will stay with you after college, requires you to

take some risks and make some mistakes. In this course you will be allowed to make some mistakes without significant punishment of grades, if I believe you are trying.

Grades are an imperfect attempt to quantify judgments about quality. I will do my best to correlate grading to your learning. Please remember, I will be grading your work, not you.

The best way for you to get a good grade in this course is to invest significant time, effort and care on the assignments, tests and quizzes. It is important that you follow the guidelines on all assignments.

The surest way to get a poor grade is to do the work at the last minute, turn the work in late (or not at all), ignore assignment guidelines, fall behind on reading and/or not be prepared for tests, quizzes and discussion.

Tests, in-class assignments and quizzes:

There will be **NO** formal, scheduled tests, but an undetermined number of reading/lecture quizzes or in-class assignments will be given, sometimes without notice. The questions will be a combination of multiple choice, lists, true-false, editing and essay.

This is a discussion course. Concerning quizzes, fewer will be given if I believe you are reading the material and are prepared in class for discussion. More will be given if that is not the case.

Grading:

In evaluating your assignments I will consider and review spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax and Associated Press style. Do not allow major factual errors. If this happens, I will have no choice but to lower your score on the assignment, possibly below passing.

In evaluating story reporting, consideration will also include news judgment in gathering and selecting information, accuracy, story approach and fairness.

The following will also be considered in grading stories: Does the lead tell what the story is about? Is it interesting/creative? Is the story well reported? Is story-telling evident, as well as humanity? Does it have multiple sources? Is it balanced and objective? Are all of the reader's questions answered? Are direct quotes informative and of high quality? Are all sides of a story represented with a diversity of voices? Is material organized in a logical fashion? Is writing clear and concise? Is the story written with precise nouns, strong verbs, active voice, correct tense, short sentences and paragraphs, etc.?

Story Letter Grading:

Here is how I will assign grades to the stories you submit:

- A (90-100 percent) = the story needs only minor editing (this is a publishable story).
- B (80-89 percent) = the story is good, but contains some minor problems that need work (also a publishable story).
- C (70-79 percent) = the story is an acceptable completion of the assignment, but it has one or two serious problems in the reporting or writing and/or other problems.
- D (60-69 percent) = the story is seriously flawed; three or more serious problems in reporting or writing, or not adhering to syllabus standards (this story can't be published; it needs to be re-written).
- F (59 percent or below) = the assignment has not been completed on deadline, or was seriously lacking in effort (could not be published).

Major points breakdown (approximate):

Activity/Assignment Points

Attendance.....250

Round Table Project.....300

Native American Project...500

See gradebook for all assignments.

Integrity/Plagiarism:

The following material is taken from various WSU policies: Plagiarism - handing in written work that is not your own - is a form of stealing. Other people (your teachers, fellow students, tutors in writing labs) may give you suggestions for improving a piece of written work, but the work itself must be your own.

There are two forms of plagiarism. One is unintentional or careless when you use other writers' words and ideas, usually in a research paper, as though they were your own. This sort of plagiarism occurs because of unfamiliarity with the conventions of documentation. You must learn how to quote, paraphrase and summarize the ideas of others in an acceptable journalistic style. If you commit this kind of plagiarism you will be asked to rewrite part or all of the paper so that your sources are properly acknowledged. You can then receive credit for the paper.

The second form of plagiarism is outright cheating - turning in a paper that someone else has written and claiming it as your own, or copying sections of a book or article without proper documentation when you are responsible for understanding proper sourcing. If you do this, the penalty for cheating may range from failing the paper to failing the course, depending on the evidence and the extent of the dishonesty in plagiarizing. Cases might also be referred to the University Conduct Committee (where there is the power to expel students from the institution).

Material obtained from the Internet is subject to academic integrity guidelines, and might even be identified more easily by special online search engines used to evaluate suspect material.

Students enrolled in WSU courses are expected to uphold standards of academic integrity and are subject to rules governing plagiarism.

Creating quotes or inventing sources will result in an "F" on the assignment (possibly an "F" in the course).

Reasonable Accommodation:

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify me during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be unavailable. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Administration Annex 205, 335-1566 in Pullman.

Deadlines:

While I am aware university life demands that you juggle many competing priorities, deadlines are extremely important in journalism and critical for this class. Publications and editors depend on reporters to complete assignments on time. Your success in this class will depend on timely work. You should have few reasons to miss deadlines. In-class assignments, tests and quizzes **CANNOT** be made up if you are absent (unless I provide approval based on unusual circumstances). No assignments may be turned in late unless I have made such an accommodation in advance.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class, unless otherwise noted.

Class Time:

Class time will be divided between instruction and the realistic application of each unit of study. Laboratory sessions will require students to work on or complete assignments in a controlled setting. Because most assignments will

require a computer, and some assignments require a computer with publication software, some classroom time will be utilized for assignments.

Classroom Conduct:

Computer monitors must be turned off during class lectures, unless they are being used to take notes. You may not work on homework for this or other courses during class time, unless I approve in advance. Do not surf the Internet or play computer games during class time. Beepers and cell phones must be turned off or set to vibrate, so they won't disturb others. Private conversations must take place outside the classroom. Violations of classroom conduct might result in the loss of attendance points for the day, with more severe penalties (at my discretion) with repeated misconduct.

Projects:

The class will be assigned to organize and facilitate a round table credibility project with the Moscow-Pullman Daily News, and write a public affairs in-depth story on a Native American story topic/issue. See gradebook for more detail.

Anonymous Sources:

In most cases, do not use anonymous sources. I must approve usage in advance or stories will not be accepted.

Identification:

You must always identify yourself to sources or those you are interviewing as a reporting student whose work might be published.

Course Term

From January 10, 2005 To April 28, 2005

Sessions:

January, 2005						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February, 2005						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

March, 2005						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April, 2005						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

[Introduction and Journalism as a Public Forum](#)

From January 11, 2005 **To** January 11, 2005

[Beats and Mapping](#)

From January 13, 2005 **To** January 13, 2005

[Native American Project](#)

From January 18, 2005 **To** January 18, 2005

[Round Table Project](#)

From January 20, 2005 **To** January 20, 2005

[Smoke Signals Movie](#)

From January 25, 2005 **To** January 25, 2005

[Smoke Signals Movie-Part 2](#)

From January 27, 2005 **To** January 27, 2005

[Civic Journalism](#)

From February 01, 2005 **To** February 01, 2005

[Independence vs. Civic Journalism](#)

From February 03, 2005 **To** February 03, 2005

[Round Table Project Work Session](#)

From February 08, 2005 **To** February 08, 2005

[Interviewing and Truth](#)

From February 10, 2005 **To** February 10, 2005

[Native American Project Work Session](#)

From February 15, 2005 **To** February 15, 2005

[Numbers and Data](#)

From February 17, 2005 **To** February 17, 2005

Round Table Project Work Session

From February 22, 2005 **To** February 22, 2005

Free Work Day

From February 24, 2005 **To** February 24, 2005

Government Reporting/Who Journalists Work For

From March 01, 2005 **To** March 01, 2005

Guest Speaker

From March 03, 2005 **To** March 03, 2005

Native American Project Work Session

From March 08, 2005 **To** March 08, 2005

Work Day

From March 10, 2005 **To** March 10, 2005

Spring Break

From March 15, 2005 **To** March 15, 2005

Spring Break

From March 17, 2005 **To** March 17, 2005

Work Session

From March 22, 2005 **To** March 22, 2005

Law Enforcement

From March 24, 2005 **To** March 24, 2005

Media Access and Law

From March 29, 2005 **To** March 29, 2005

Round Table Night Event

From March 31, 2005 **To** March 31, 2005

Work Days

From April 05, 2005 **To** April 07, 2005

Community Connections

From April 12, 2005 **To** April 12, 2005

Participant Observation and Field Experiments

From April 12, 2005 To April 12, 2005

[Ethical Concerns & Conscience](#)

From April 14, 2005 To April 14, 2005

[Education, Engagement and Relevance](#)

From April 19, 2005 To April 19, 2005

[Native American Project Work Session](#)

From April 21, 2005 To April 21, 2005

[Last Class](#)

From April 26, 2005 To April 26, 2005

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