

ADVANCED NEWS REPORTING

MC 310-1

Spring 2009

1 p.m. to 1:50 p.m., MWF

Ferguson Center, Room 225

Instructor and Office Hours:

David L. Roberts, Assistant Professor

Ferguson Center, Room 215

Office: (660) 831-4211

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Hours: 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., MW

3 p.m. to 5 p.m., TR

3 p.m. to 5 p.m., MW

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

MC 310-1 ADVANCED NEWS REPORTING - 3 hours. Advanced instruction and experience in reporting and writing news stories, editorials, and features in accordance with accepted journalistic practice established by the Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual. Students enrolled will be required to help produce the Delta. Prerequisites: MC 210. Spring.

RATIONALE:

This course is designed to provide students with advanced journalism skills for reporting and writing news stories, writing editorials as well as columns and reviews, and reporting and writing feature stories. Depth in terms of research is important. Emphasis will continued to be placed on spelling, accuracy, reporting techniques, AP style, news judgment, and other features. Helping to produce the Delta will provide more opportunity for advanced reporting emphasis.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1). To continue to use the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook as well as inverted pyramid or hour-glass style for news writing and feature writing.
- 2). To learn the structures for crafting and writing editorials, columns, and reviews, as well as other specific types of reporting.
- 3). To review historical information about the First Amendment, famous journalists, and landmark press law decisions.
- 4). To understand advanced reporting requirements (accuracy, journalism terminology, general libel and ethics knowledge, meeting deadlines, beat coverage, and other aspects).
- 5). To encourage objective thinking in the student journalist.
- 6). To further the education with reporting skills and tools, such as computers, editing marks, research sources, question formulation, interviewing techniques, quotation use, speech coverage and other reporting practices.
- 7). To assist with the Delta student newspaper.

GOAL AND COMPETENCIES:

Upon successful completion of the Advanced News Reporting course, the student will have demonstrated the ability:

- 1). To understand further history and terminology of news reporting and print journalism.
- 2). To know the differences in style and structure for feature stories, editorials, columns, reviews, and other forms of writing.
- 3). To know how to write research and add needed depth to feature stories or to analysis pieces or critiques.
- 4). To have a better understanding of key issues involving communication law and ethics.
- 5). To adequately and competently cover news stories on campus.

EXAMINATIONS:

This course will include a mid-term exam and a final exam.

ORGANIZATION:

The course will include reporting and writing assignments, quizzes, and other evaluations, with class participation, class lectures, outside assignments, special presentations, guest speakers, and other features.

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

If a student misses more than 50 percent of the class at any given point within the semester, he or she will be dropped from the class. This will be recorded as a withdraw fail (WF).

Missing more than 10 classes without an acceptable excused absence will result in an automatic reduction of the final grade by one grade letter.

You should arrive for class prior to or on time. Do not come if you are late. It is rude to be late to any scheduled event and especially disruptive for a classroom.

CLASSROOM DECORUM:

The student is expected to abide by the codes of conduct outlined in the latest Missouri Valley College Student Handbook.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Students are expected to abide by the official policies found in the latest Missouri Valley College Student Handbook and other college documents pertaining to this academic year.

Therefore, all forms of cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated, will result in the failure of this course, along with possible dismissal from college, and must be reported to the division dean and the college president.

Plagiarism, the unacknowledged use of others' ideas, organization and words, is a very serious offense. Therefore, you must attribute to sources when using borrowed information or quotes in your news copy.

MVC STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT:

It shall be the responsibility of every student enrolled at Missouri Valley College to support the academic integrity of the institution. This applies to personal honesty in all aspects of collegiate work, all student records and all contacts with faculty and

staff. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

It shall be the responsibility of every student enrolled at Missouri Valley College to be respectful of the right of other students, staff and instructors to ensure a safe, peaceful atmosphere conducive to the educational goals of an institution of higher learning. Rude or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

Student actions that do not adhere to the MVC Student Code of Conduct will be addressed according to College policies regarding academic dishonesty and disruptive behavior. Students who exhibit dishonest, disruptive, or disrespectful behavior risk suspension or expulsion from the institution.

MVC AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) STATEMENT

Special needs: If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact your instructor immediately. After proper documentation, reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.

EVALUATION:

You will be evaluated according to:

- 1). Quality of work on assignments, quizzes, mid-term and final.
- 2). Class participation and attendance.
- 3). Completion of any class assignments by deadline.

GRADING:

Grading scale will be "A" (100-90) meaning "excellent," "B" (89-80) meaning "good," "C" (79-70) meaning "average," "D" (69-60) meaning "below average," "F" (59 and below) meaning "failure."

Grades will be based, with points or numbers, for assignments relating to: feature stories, reviews, columns, editorials, news stories, assigned Delta newspaper stories, assigned nonfiction book, quizzes, exams, attendance, and participation.

TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS:

Required:

The Missouri Group (Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, Don Ranly). News Reporting and Writing. Eighth edition. Boston: Bedford's/St. Martin's, 2005.

Associated Press Stylebook, recent edition. New York: The Associated Press, 2006.

Provided, by generous donation:

Evans, Harold. War Stories, Reporting in the Time of Conflict From the Crimea to Iraq. Boston: Bunker Hill Publishing, 2003.

Also provided:

Missouri Almanac. Articles or books (for specific chapter readings).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week 1:

Friday, Jan. 9 -- Introduction.

Week 2:

Jan. 12 -- Week of discussion for review of inverted pyramid form. Reporting terms. Beginning of spelling list. Feature-writing

style.

Jan. 14 - Assignments.
Jan. 16 - Informational session.

Week 3:

Jan. 19 -- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. No class.
Jan. 21 -- Week of discussion for News Reporting and Writing textbook, Chapter 12: Speeches, News Conferences, and Meetings.
Jan. 23 -- Featured topic: Editorials. Assignments.

Week 4:

Jan. 26 - Week of discussion for News Reporting and Writing textbook, Chapter 13: Other Types of Basic Stories.
Jan. 28 -- Featured topic: Columns. Assignments.
Jan. 30 -- In-class event.

Week 5:

Feb. 2 -- Week of discussion for Chapter 14: Covering a Beat.
Feb. 4 -- Featured topic: Reviews. Assignments.
Feb. 6 -- First quiz.

Week 6:

Feb. 9 -- Week of discussion for Chapter 15: Business and Consumer News.
Feb. 11 -- Featured topic: Feature Stories. Assignments.
Feb. 13 -- In-class event. Description practice.

Week 7:

Feb. 16 -- Week of discussion for Chapter 16: Sports.
Feb. 18 -- Featured topic: More about Feature Stories.
Assignments.
Feb. 20 -- In-class event.

Week 8:

Feb. 23 -- Week of discussion for Chapter 17: Social Science Reporting.
Feb. 25 -- Featured topic: Depth Reporting. Research and practice, involving the library.
Feb. 27 -- Gathering information.

Week 9:

March 2 -- Mid-Term Exam.
March 4 -- Discussion of Chapter 18: Investigative Reporting.
March 6 -- Reporting-with-numbers practice.

Week 10:

March 9 -- Week of discussion for Chapter 19: Writing News for Radio and Television.
March 11 -- Featured topic: Travel Story. Assignments.
March 13 -- In-class event.

Week 11:

March 16-20 - Spring Break.

Week 12:

March 23 -- Week of discussion for Chapter 20: Writing for Online Media.

March 25 -- Featured topic: Return to Column-Writing.

Assignments.

March 27 -- In-class event.

Week 13:

March 30 --Week of discussion for Chapter 21: Writing for Public Relations.

April 1 -- Featured topic: Profiles. Assignments.

April 3 -- Quiz.

Week 14:

April 6 -- Discussion for Chapter 22: Media Law.

April 8 -- Assignments.

April 10 -- Good Friday. No class.

Week 15:

April 13 -- Discussion for Chapter 23: Ethics.

April 15 -- Assignments.

April 17 -- Quiz.

Week 16:

April 20 -- Special project.

April 22 -- Special project.

April 24 -- Special project.

Week 17:

April 27 -- Special project.

April 29 -- Special project.

May 1 -- Review. Final assignments due.

Finals week: May 5-8.

Final exam scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, at 1 p.m.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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Phillips, Peter and Project Censored. Censored 2007, The Top 25 Censored Stories. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006.

Roberts, David L., editor. The Missouri Almanac. Marshall, Mo.: Missouri Valley College Press, 2006.

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Wiegrand, Shirley A., and Wayne A. Wiegrand. Books on Trial: Red Scare in the Heartland. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT

I have received a copy of the syllabus for the Advanced News Reporting course and will retain it for my use during the Spring 2009 semester.

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____