

JOUR 2310: Introduction to Media Writing

Fall 2009; GAB 112□
Lecture: MW 1.00 to 2.20 p.m.
Lab: F 9.00 to 10.50 a.m.

Instructor:

Nikhil Moro, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Office: GAB 102D; Hours: MW 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., and by appointment

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Teaching Assistant:

Rebecca Hoeffner

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Course description:

The course will introduce you to the fundamentals of writing, reporting, and information gathering, primarily for journalism but also, to a smaller extent, for other mass communication professions such as public relations and advertising. The course will enable you to appreciate news and its credible reporting. You will begin to understand why and how writing is informed by its medium – newsprint, Web, or broadcast. You will appreciate why and how to be concise, accurate, and complete, all while working to deadline. You will also brush up your grammar, spelling and punctuation skills and become familiar with the Associated Press style.

Objectives:

The course should enable you to:

1. Define news
2. Conduct a news interview
3. Compose a well-organized news story, with an effective lead, for multiple media
4. Write correctly and clearly
5. Apply, to a fair extent, the AP style
6. Appreciate basic numerical and statistical concepts
7. Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

Textbooks:

- ⑦ *Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method*, 6th Edition, by Carole Rich
- ⑦ *Student Workbook for Writing and Reporting News* (online, or TA will make copies available)
- ⑦ *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law (2009)*
- ⑦ *The North Texas Daily* stylebook (available at www.ntdstaff.com)

Requirements:

1. *Attendance:* You will best succeed in this course with a high record of attendance. I ask that you inform me, or the TA, in advance of missing class or lab. I reserve the right to drop you after four unexcused absences, but in any case, starting with the second I will penalize you ten points per absence. About five minutes after class starts, the classroom door will be shut.
2. *Make-up tests:* You may make up a graded assignment only with a doctor's note or other persuasive document.

3. *Professional attitude*: You should treat this class as you would a job. Please heed deadlines, show earnestness to learn, and strive to produce copy of publishable quality. Consider carrying the AP stylebook to all class/lab meetings.

4. *Readings*: With this class, you should begin to transform from a news consumer to a news writer. Given that successful journalists invariably are voracious readers of their peers' work, I ask that, in addition to the required textbooks, you read a newspaper front page every day and share insights during relevant class discussion. Courtesy of the Mayborn School of Journalism, I may be able to get you free copies of the *Denton Record Chronicle* every class. You should also consume and analyze broadcast news, and browse your favorite local news site, on a daily basis. You should make a conscious attempt to be nuanced as you observe how news is gathered, reported and analyzed.

5. *Source sheets*: For assignments that involve interviewing sources, you must attach a page listing source names and contact information, and the dates of interview.

Integrity:

You should respect UNT's Student Code of Conduct found at www.unt.edu/csrr. By submitting gradable work, you state that you produced it entirely. Plagiarism occurs when you use other people's written words as your own – some people define plagiarism as the use of seven words in a row copied from another source without attribution or citation. In the profession, plagiarism can get you fired. In this class, as per rules of the Mayborn School of Journalism, you would face one or more of the following penalties: A score of "0" if it was in a minor assignment; a request that you drop the class if it was in a major assignment; your withdrawal from the class initiated by me; an "F" grade for the course; a referral to UNT's Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities; a notation on your transcript; and suspension or expulsion from UNT.

Disabilities:

The Mayborn School of Journalism allows reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you require any such accommodation, please contact me in the first three weeks of class.

Grades:

The fractions of your aggregate points will be as follows:

Five quizzes: 10 points each for a total of 50 points

Five lab assignments: 10 points each for a total of 50 points

Five class/homework assignments: 10 points each for a total of 50 points

A mid-term (interview assignment): 50 points

A final (basic news story assignment): 100 points

Aggregate possible: 300 points

Extra credit: Up to 20 points for every byline of 600 words or more published in the *North Texas Daily* or other instructor-approved media outlet, to a maximum of 60 points.

Your final course grade will be determined as follows:

90-100% will be A (270 points or more)

80-89% will be B (240 points or more)

70-79% will be C (210 points or more); 60-69% will be D (180 points or more)

59% and below will get an F (179 points or less).

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Calendar

<p>Week 1</p>	<p>August 31: Course introduction September 2: What is news? September 4: Lab – Introduction to AP Style</p>
<p>Week 2 (<i>Lab assignment 1</i>)</p>	<p>September 7: <i>No class (Labor Day)</i> September 9: Convergence and blogs September 11: Lab – Lab assignment 1 (on AP style); Chapter 1</p>
<p>Week 3</p>	<p>September 14: The basic news story September 16: The basic news story September 18: Lab – Chapters 2 and 3</p>
<p>Week 4 (<i>Quiz 1</i>) (<i>Lab assignment 2</i>)</p>	<p>September 21: Sources; Quiz 1 (carefully read chapters 1-4) September 23: Sources September 25: Lab – Chapters 4 and 5; Lab assignment 2</p>
<p>Week 5 (<i>Class/homework assignment 1</i>) (<i>Lab assignment 3</i>)</p>	<p>September 28: Interviewing; Mid-term will be announced September 30: Profiling; Class/homework assignment 1 October 2: Lab – Chapter 6; Lab assignment 3</p>
<p>Week 6 (<i>Class/homework assignment 2</i>) (<i>Mid-term due</i>) <i>October 6 is the last day to withdraw with an automatic “W”</i></p>	<p>October 5: Leads and nut graphs; Class/homework assignment 2 October 7: Leads and nut graphs; Submit Mid-term in class October 9: Lab – Chapter 7</p>
<p>Week 7 (<i>Quiz 2</i>) (<i>Class/homework assignment 3</i>)</p>	<p>October 12: Leads and nut graphs; Quiz 2 (on chapters 5, 6 and 7) October 14: Leads and nut graphs; Class/homework assignment 3 October 16: Lab – Chapter 8</p>
<p>Week 8 (<i>Lab assignment 4</i>)</p>	<p>October 19: Story structure October 21: Story structure October 23: Lab – Chapters 8 and 9; Lab assignment 4</p>

<p>Week 9</p> <p><i>October 30 is the last day to drop with consent of instructor</i></p>	<p>October 26: Feature writing October 28: Numbers and statistics October 30: Lab – Chapters 10 and 11</p>
<p>Week 10</p> <p><i>(Quiz 3)</i></p>	<p>November 2: Broadcast writing; Quiz 3 (on numbers and statistics) November 4: Broadcast writing November 6: Lab – Chapter 12</p>
<p>Week 11</p> <p><i>(Class/homework assignment 4)</i></p> <p><i>(Lab assignment 5)</i></p>	<p>November 9: Web writing November 11: Web writing; Class/homework assignment 4 November 13: Lab – Chapter 13; Lab assignment 5</p>
<p>Week 12</p> <p><i>(Quiz 4)</i></p>	<p>November 16: Public relations writing (guest lecture) November 18: Public relations writing; Quiz 4 (on chapter 14 plus notes) November 20: Lab – Chapter 14</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p><i>(Class/homework assignment 5)</i></p>	<p>November 23: Topics in ethics November 25: Movie show; Class/homework assignment 5 November 27: <i>No class (Thanksgiving)</i></p>
<p>Week 14</p>	<p>November 30: Topics in law (First Amendment) December 2: Topics in law (Libel, privacy, etc.) December 4: Lab – Chapter 16</p>
<p>Week 15</p> <p><i>(Quiz 5)</i></p>	<p>December 7: Diversity sensitivity December 9: Quiz 5, on chapters 15 and 16 December 11: <i>No class (Reading Day)</i></p>
<p>Week 16</p> <p><i>(Final due)</i></p>	<p>December 14: Submit final (hard copy) by 3 p.m.</p>