

# **JOUR 2340**

## **WRITING FOR ELECTRONIC NEWS MEDIA**

Fall 2009  
9:00-10:20 T-Th  
GAB 319

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Office hours: M/W 2:30-4:00; T/Th 10:30-Noon  
Also by Appointment

### **TEXT:**

Required: "AP Broadcast News Handbook," Brad Kalbfeld, McGraw-Hill, 2001.

Required: "Writing and Producing Television News," Alan Schroeder, Oxford University Press, 2009.

Required: A stopwatch or device to time your copy  
A computer memory stick

Recommended: A thesaurus, a dictionary

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS:**

In this class, you will expand your knowledge of broadcast writing for radio and TV newscasts and for the web. You will learn to write carefully, quickly and on deadline. You will learn to work in a radio newsroom. You will develop a greater understanding of the critical role of broadcast and web news journalists in American society, and why journalists must always be accurate and meet all deadlines.

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- Understand and apply First Amendment principles
- Understand and appreciate the critical role of journalists in American society
- Understand the importance of diversity in broadcast and web news
- Demonstrate knowledge and use of fundamentals of broadcast and web writing
- Write accurately, clearly, concisely, in appropriate styles and forms for on air and on line
- Learn to combine facts and sound into writing
- Develop a clear sense of "newsworthiness"
- Make all deadlines
- Work ethically, truthfully, accurately
- Think critically, creatively and independently
- Research and evaluate information based on industry standards
- Apply tools and technologies used in broadcast and web industries

**You will learn to write on DEADLINE.**

**Just as late material does NOT make a newscast, LATE WORK IN THIS CLASS DOES NOT MAKE MY GRADE BOOK. Period. (One second late is late)**

All radio, TV and web work must be typed, and written in the appropriate style and format.

I will judge your work for accuracy, clarity, conciseness, style, proper use of the language including grammar, spelling and punctuation, newsworthiness, aggressiveness, creativity, timeliness, deadlines, and initiative – in general, on good journalistic techniques based on current industry standards.

**GRADING:**

You may earn up to 1,100 points in this course. Every student starts with zero. You may earn points as follows:

Writing assignments	300 points (15 assignments x 20pts)
Radio/TV news critiques	30 points (3 assignments x 10pts)
Web writing	30 points (3 assignments x 10pts)
Question of the Day	40 points (2pts per question; maximum of 40 pts)
KNTU work	300 points (10 shifts x 30 points)
Midterm	125 points
Final project	250 points
Evaluation	25 points
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Total Possible	1,100 points

**GRADING SCALE:**

- 1,100 – 975 = A
- 974- 850 = B
- 849 - 725 = C
- 724- 600 = D
- 599 - below = F

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: 300 points** (15 assignments x 20 points each)

In class and homework assignments will include writing from wire copy, newspaper articles, notes, tapes, lectures and the textbook. You must follow the rules of accuracy, clarity, conciseness, style, spelling, usage, grammar, etc. You must meet all deadlines.

**RADIO & TV NEWS CRITIQUES: 30 points** (3 assignments x 10 points each)

Becoming a broadcast journalist requires an understanding of the “product.” During the semester, you will be required to listen to various radio news reports and newscasts and watch various television news reports and newscasts, and then write a critique. Your critique will be based on certain criteria, including style, structure, clarity, understandability, grammar, “stacking,” newsworthiness, use of sound and natural sound, use of video, plus other criteria to be defined later. All work must be typed, written in the appropriate style, and turned in on time.

**WEB WRITING: 30 points** (3 assignments x 10 points each)

You will learn some of the basics of writing copy for the web, including style, structure and format. You will write using various sources and on deadline.

**QUESTION OF THE DAY: 40 points** (2 points/question, up to a max of 40 points)

Knowing what’s going on in local, national and international news is critical. You can earn points for a “**Question of the Day**,” asked at the start of each class period. It’s based on current events, issues and other facts a journalist should know.

**KNTU WORK: 300 points** (10 shifts x 30 points each)

As an aspiring journalist, it’s critical that you keep your skills fresh on a daily basis, including writing quickly and making deadlines. For this class, you are required to work ten 2-hour shifts at KNTU-FM, the university’s 100,000 watt radio station. During each shift, you will gather, write and rewrite news copy for that day’s newscast. You **MUST** complete your work on deadline during each shift. Details will be explained later.

To receive credit, you must turn in your “completion” sheet which has been signed by the student news director or the staff news supervisor, plus a copy of both your original script and the edited version which went on the air. You must turn in these documents during the same week you work the shift (preferably the same day). You must keep a notebook of all scripts and signed completion sheet to turn in for final review and grading at the end of the semester.

You will sign up for your shifts at the beginning of the semester. You must not miss your shift. If you discover you cannot work a shift, you are responsible for finding someone in this class to switch with you. NOTE: You must then communicate details of that change in advance to me 940-565-2591 ([goplerud@unt.edu](mailto:goplerud@unt.edu)), staff news supervisor Mark Lambert at 940-300-1611 ([mlambert@unt.edu](mailto:mlambert@unt.edu)) and student news director Lindsay Barber at 817-298-9731 ([lindsaybarber63@gmail.com](mailto:lindsaybarber63@gmail.com)) or KNTU 940-565-2881. Failure to notify us in advance will result in your loss of all points for that shift.

**MID-TERM EXAM: 125 points**

This exam will be given about halfway through the course. It will include questions over the text, lectures, notes, speakers, writing assignments, exercises, handouts and class discussions, and everything else that we've covered in the class. Midterm Date: TBA.

**FINAL PROJECT: 250 points**

The project will require writing, organizing and producing a 10 minute TV newscast, incorporating videotape, wire reports, notes, and interviews. You must demonstrate good TV news writing and newscast structure based on newsworthiness, accuracy, clarity, conciseness, formatting, style and other criteria. Exact criteria and requirements will be handed out later in the semester. The project must fill, but not exceed, the time limits of the newscast. The Final Project will be due before the semester ends, exact date: TBA. There will be no final exam, but you will be required to participate in a final discussion during the final exam time, **Thursday, Dec. 17, 9 a.m.**

**TEACHER EVALUATION: 25 points**

You may earn up to 25 points in my overall evaluation of your work. Among other things, I will judge you on class participation, eagerness, creativity, initiative, overall quality of your work, and improvement during the semester.

**I do NOT believe in Extra Credit.** I expect you to show up for class, turn in assignments, complete the work and make the deadlines.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

When you submit work for this class, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people's work are unacceptable. You are expected to conform to the university's policies regarding academic integrity.

**PLAGIARISM:**

You are learning the craft of Journalism, which is about **accuracy and truth telling.**  
**DO NOT LIE, CHEAT OR MAKE UP STUFF.**

(See the attached page)

**HONOR CODE:**

(See the attached page)

## **ATTENDANCE, SICK AND OTHER POLICIES:**

I will be in class. I expect you to be here, too.

If you are sick and miss class, you must bring a doctor's excuse to make up the in-class assignment. If you have a doctor's excuse, we will then arrange a time to make up any in-class writing. You must immediately get any homework assignment from me or another student and turn it in on time (when it's due!). If someone in your immediate family dies during the semester, please provide documentation to me. See me about making up the work you missed.

**Turn off** cell phones and all other electronic devices before class starts. Text messaging and checking e-mail is not permitted during class. If you violate these policies, I will ask you to leave the room.

Civility is expected at all times toward the professor and one another.

## **CLOTHING/APPEARANCE:**

One of your "jobs" during this semester is working at the radio station. It is possible you will be sent out on a story, so please wear appropriate clothing during those times. Men, you must wear a shirt with a collar, nice jeans, slacks or shorts. Women, you must wear a shirt with sleeves, long pants or a skirt or dress that is not short or revealing. No low cut or sleeveless tops. You are learning how professional journalists work. Dressing and acting appropriately are an important part of being professional and believable. You must follow this dress code or automatically lose points on your radio assignments.

## **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION:**

The Mayborn School of Journalism cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodations to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students. If you have not registered with ODA, please do so, and present your written accommodation request to me by the 12th day of class.

## **RE-TAKING FAILED COURSES:**

The Mayborn School of Journalism does not allow students to take a major course more than twice. If you receive a D or F in this course two times, you must wait 12 months, and then you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

## **MacLab**

All students enrolled in this journalism class pay a fee, which entitles you to use the MacLab, GAB 305.

## **COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

This is a major level class. By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisite courses and you have been accepted as a major, unless specific exceptions have been made by me. Please see me right away if you have not completed these requirements. If I later determine that you have not taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. You must give me an unofficial transcript by the second meeting of this class.

Each semester, you'll need to print your unofficial transcript, highlighting all of the journalism courses that you have taken. You'll use this transcript to show you qualify to continue in the major, and to obtain class codes in the Journalism advising office before registering for next semester classes.

**Now....let the fun begin!!**

**You must watch and listen to radio and TV newscasts, read newspapers and web articles throughout the semester. I expect you to attend each class. Be here on time and come ready to discuss and write. Broadcast news is an exciting and HIGHLY COMPETITIVE business. If you want to make it, you must learn to write well.**

**You'll work hard this semester – and I hope you'll discover how important and fun this is!**

# Plagiarism

Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people's written words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7-10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people's writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially in journalism. It is a firing offense in the professional world. In the Department of Journalism and Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism at UNT, students face a range of penalties for plagiarism (depending on the importance of the assignment):

- a grade of "F" on a minor assignment
- a request that the student drop the class
- withdrawal of the student from the class, initiated by the professor
- an "F" in the course
- a referral to the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities
- a notation on the student's transcript
- and expulsion from the university.

A combination of these penalties may also be used.

# Honor Code

## Mayborn School of Journalism • Mayborn Graduate Institute

### University of North Texas

The faculty, staff, and students of the University of North Texas Mayborn School of Journalism and Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism regard honesty and integrity as essential qualities of our Journalism students and as reflections of the standards of the professions for which journalism educates its students.

Students of The University of North Texas Mayborn School of Journalism and Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism have entered a community of scholarship and journalism where academic integrity is of the highest importance.

By enrolling in Journalism classes, all students agree to uphold this Honor Code. All students taking Journalism classes agree that in their course work and interaction with faculty and staff they will not engage in:

- **Fabricating** information, data, research, quotations or sources.
- **Plagiarizing** the words or other creative work of another person: Plagiarism consists of intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another person as one's own. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the knowing or intentional failure to attribute language or ideas to their original source, in the manner required by the academic discipline (such as by quotation marks, attribution in the text, and footnotes citations in an academic exercise) or in the manner required by journalism practice (such as by quotation marks and attribution in a journalistic presentation).
- **Looking at the exam** of another student or using unauthorized notes, study aids or other materials during an examination.
- **Altering and resubmitting** work previously submitted and graded (this does not include rewrites of previously graded lab assignments).
- **Submitting identical** or substantially the same work for credit in more than one course.
- **Obtaining unfair advantage**, aiding and abetting, and falsifying records.
- **Academic sabotage**, by intentionally taking any action, which negatively affects the academic work of another student.

Professional journalists who fabricate and/or plagiarize violate industry standards and the public trusts greatly compromising the integrity of their medium. Such journalists are often disciplined or fired. Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism and Mayborn graduate students, especially those whose work goes out to client news organizations via the School of Journalism, will be held to the same standards in their work.

At the Mayborn School of Journalism and Mayborn Graduate Institute, all of the activities listed above are grounds for sanctions ranging from a reprimand to revocation of a degree or expulsion from the University.

Honor Code based on The Medill School of Journalism (2001 pledge) with amendments approved by the faculty of the Mayborn School of Journalism and the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism (2004).

